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Dragon

MAGAZINE

Science-Fiction

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#157

THE 25TH CENTURY

Role-Playing Game



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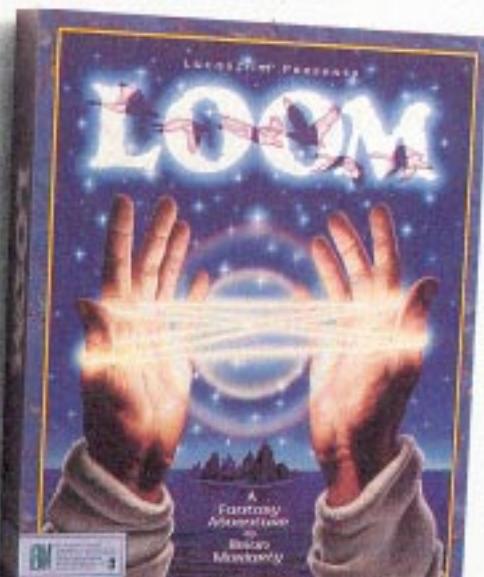
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CYBERTECH EXTRA-HEAVIES WITH HEAVY MACHINE GUN

C3003a - with ammo case

C3003b - advancing

C3003c - standing

CYBERTECH EXTRA-HEAVY COM-OFFICERS

C3005a - operating terminal

C3005b - advancing

CYBERTECH EXTRA-HEAVIES WITH GRENADE LAUNCHER

C3006a - advancing

C3006b - giving orders

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH MACHINE PISTOL

C3031a - advancing

C3031b - firing (2 weapons)

C3031c - firing

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH LASER RIFLE

C3033a - firing (targeteer helmet)

C3033b - advancing

C3033c - standing

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH HEAVY LASER

C3034a - firing (helmet at side)

C3034b - firing

C3034c - with raised weapon

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH HEAVY MACHINE GUN

C3036a - advancing

C3036b - firing

C3036c - standing

PHAGON BATTLE-CLONES WITH NEEDLER

C3221a - advancing

C3221b - standing

C3221c - firing

PHAGON WITH COMBAT NEEDLER

C3243a - advancing

C3243b - standing

C3243c - standing (weapon raised)

C3243d - firing

C3243e - advancing (weapon raised)

PHAGON VEHICLES

C3291a - Command Walker Mk I

C3291b - Walker "Hammerhead" Mk II

C3291c - Walker "Sunburst" Mk III

C3291d - Walker "Triad" Mk IIC

C3291e - Walker "Stinger" Mk IA

IMPERIAL ROBOT LEGIONS 1

C3601a - Scavenger

C3601b - Conqueror

C3601c - Hercules

IMPERIAL ROBOT LEGIONS 2

C3602a - Behemoth

C3602b - Smasher

ADVENTURERS 1

C3701a - adventuress with laser

C3701b - adventuress with heavy needler

C3701c - adventurer with coat

CIVILIANS 1

C3706a - punk

C3706b - trader with cloak

C3706c - carrying documents

C3706d - lady in long dress

SHIP'S CREW

C3720a - navigatress

C3720b - cargo officer

C3720c - mechanic

C3720d - medic

C3720e - security-officer, standing

C3720f - security-officer, running

PERSONALITIES

C3724a - Dawleen

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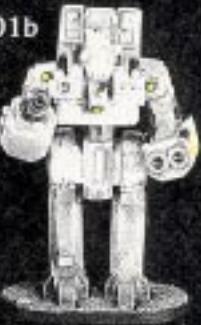
C3602a



C3602b



C3601c



C3601b



C3720a



C3701b



C3720f



C3701c



C3724a



C3034b



C3036b



C3031a



C3033a



C3005a



C3003b



C3005b

Dragon®

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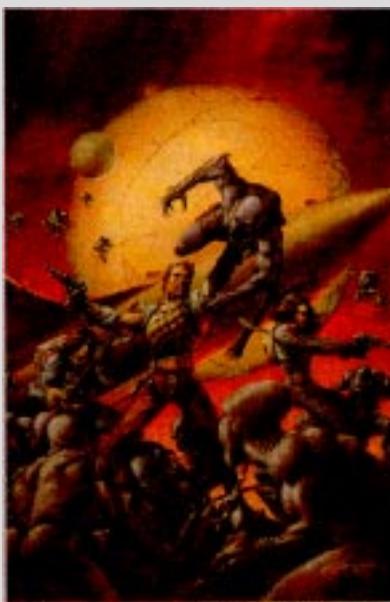
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COVER

Earth is in ruins and enslaved by a soulless megacorporation—but there's one hope left for freedom, and that's Buck Rogers. Artist Jerry Bingham offers his vision of the future's greatest hero (and some of the problems he faces) on this issue's cover and on page 9.

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Time traveling

Dear Dragon:

In your editorial in issue #155, you mentioned that readers might try to find an old copy of the TIMEMASTER® game or its supplements to get some interesting ideas for alternate-history role-playing. Our company has acquired the rights to, and a substantial inventory of, TIMEMASTER game products, and we are selling the products by mail order and at various game conventions. Readers wishing to follow your suggestion can get a copy of our order form by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to 540° 40' Orphyte, Inc., P.O. Box 2108, Naperville IL 60567-2108, U.S.A. Alternate-history gamers can also sign up for the RPGA™-sanctioned TIMEMASTER scenario scheduled for the 1990 GEN CON® games fair, and get the chance to save the history of rock & roll.

Donald J. Bingle
Naperville IL

Paladin playing

Dear Dragon:

I find it very difficult to find many role-playing aids for playing the paladin character in AD&D® games. It seems to be treated like an NPC rather than a playable character. Also, novels offering various examples of paladins would be very helpful. . . . I would very much like to learn how to play this complex yet powerful character.

P.S. There have to be more examples of paladins *besides* the Knights of the Round Table and King Arthur! If more gamers played paladins, maybe America would think differently of the AD&D game.

James Laing
Binghamton NY

DRAGON Magazine has run a number of articles on paladins in the past. You might check issue #38, "From the Sorcerer's Scroll" (reprinted in *The Best of DRAWN Magazine* anthology, volume II); issue #51, "It's Not Easy Being Good" (reprinted in *The Best of DRAGON Magazine* anthology, volume III) and "Thou Shalt Play This Way"; issue #148, "Good' Does Not Mean 'Boring'"; and issue #154, "The Making of a Paladin." These articles focus on the role-playing (not game-mechanics) aspects of paladinhood. The Complete Fighter's Handbook for

the AD&D® 2nd Edition game has warrior kits and role-playing notes that anyone playing a paladin should consider (see especially the cavalier kit, though others are applicable).

As far as fantasy novels that include paladin characters, you could try Three Hearts and Three Lions, by Poul Anderson (Holger Carlsen is probably the archetype, in fact, for the whole class of paladins). The paladin Agrivar, who appears in DC's FORGOTTEN REALMSTM comics (scripted by Jeff Grubb), is another example. Agrivar, a recovered alcoholic who tries too hard to be good, is a striking member of the class. And any number of Knights of Solamnia from the DRAGONLANCE® saga could be used as templates for a paladin character, such as the doomed Sturm.

Miniature making

Dear Dragon:

Concerning the letter from Mr. Enge (issue #152) in which he asks for information on the sculpting of miniatures: Several years ago, *The Grenadier Bulletin*, a newsletter put out by that company, gave some advice on that subject. It advised sculpting the original miniature from epoxy plumber's putty, a two-part substance consisting of putty and hardener that can be purchased in most hardware stores. It also commented that since no "magical shrinking ray" had yet been invented, the miniatures must be sculpted in the actual sizes you wish the finished products to be. I myself created several miniatures in my college days and found that I preferred epoxy glue to the putty, as the latter dries rubbery while the former become hard, lending itself to greater detail in carving though it is also more difficult to mold before it dries.

For those interested in gaining more information, the logical place to write would be one of the many miniatures companies whose ads can be found throughout this magazine.

SPC Jim Johnson
New Ulm, West Germany

Norker nixing

Dear Dragon:

All right, I can't take it any more! Are you guys short of monsters, or what? How much longer are you going to pass off a couple of norkers as the "NO-SASE" ogres? If these two are ogres, I'm handing in my dice bag and taking up needlepoint.

Gordon R. Menzies
Toronto, Ontario

We'll keep passing them off as ogres as long as no one else notices the difference. Not everyone has a copy of DUNGEON® Adventures issue #1, where these guys first appeared. But we'll just make this our little secret, shall we?

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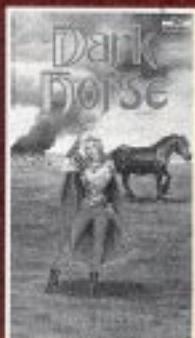
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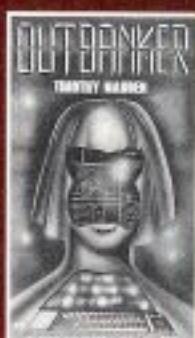
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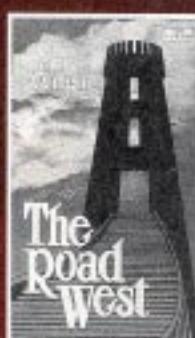
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BUCK
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XXVC
THE 25TH CENTURY



FIGHTING THE
GOOD FIGHT



INTO THE 25TH CENTURY!

A journey into the universe of the XXVc™ game

by Kim Mohan

Just what is the world of the 25th century?

Fortunately, you don't have to wait 500 years to find out. The XXVc™ Role-Playing Game has all the answers—and the boxed set will be coming in for a landing at your neighborhood game store very soon.

Chock full of booklets, maps, and other components, the box is packed tighter than the cargo hold of a Krait Fighter. (As you'll find out in the spaceship descriptions, the cargo hold of a Krait Fighter is always packed tight.) And those components hold enough information to test the capacity of the 25th century's most sophisticated Digital Personality. (As you'll find out, Digital Personalities have . . . well, you get the idea.)

The 25th century is a time of great opportunity. Mankind has moved out into the solar system. The moon, the -inner planets, and the asteroid belt are no longer dead worlds; instead, they are the homes of new civilizations—some of them remark-

ably sophisticated, considering the length of time they've been in existence.

The 25th century is a time of fantastic advances in science and technology. The science of genetics is no longer concerned with creating a new hybrid of corn or a hardier strain of wheat—scientists have discovered how to manipulate the genetic code of humans and other animals. The result is a new group of creatures known as gennies (genetically altered humans), each species tailored to maximize its chances for survival on and around the un-Earthlike worlds of the solar system. The harnessing of nuclear fusion has opened new vistas in transportation between planets; ships can now travel from Earth to Mars in less time than it takes in the 20th century to drive from New York to Los Angeles. Computer technology has advanced to the point where entire personalities can be encoded and implanted in memory banks—a form of immortality, for those who can afford it.

But the 25th century is not without its dark side. Planet Earth, the once majestic home of mankind, has gone downhill with dizzying speed. Earth is an economically and ecologically ruined planet, struggling to recover but knowing that the battle will be incredibly tough to win. The only bright spots are the pockets of affluence known as arcologies—titanic, self-contained cities inside which the residents enjoy fairly comfortable lives.

The arcologies might be able to use their wealth and influence to help the rest of the planet's population get a foothold on recovery—except that the cities, like the rest of the planet, are under the control of RAM. The most powerful political, economic, and military force in the solar system, RAM is headquartered on Mars, but its tentacles extend across millions of miles. They are wrapped especially tightly around Earth, which RAM intends to plunder and exploit until the planet is devastated to the point of no return.

Even though its ability to resist is woefully weak, Earth is not about to go down without a fight. The fledgling New Earth Organization, known as NEO, has dedicated itself to undermining RAM's power and authority in any way it can. With a patched-together space fleet and a disjointed collection of small groups of combat soldiers, the victories NEO can win right now are small ones—but small ones are better than none at all.

And now, in the year 2456, a new element has been introduced into the mix. In a major tactical and psychological coup, NEO has managed to recover and revive the body of one Anthony "Buck" Rogers, a legendary Earth hero from the last days of the 20th century. Long revered by humanity for his heroic efforts in averting a global catastrophe, Buck was also thought to be long dead. But he *did* survive, spending centuries in suspended animation. Word of his "rebirth" is spreading throughout the inner worlds; now more than just a legend, Buck is a living example to freedom fighters everywhere of what a single man, full of courage and the will to live, can accomplish against the forces of brutality and oppression.

That's a summary of the stage upon which role-playing adventures in the XXVc game will be played out. Now, here are some of the props we're giving you to make this stage come alive:

Characters & Combat: This book is the heart of the game system—96 pages of rules, statistics, and descriptions containing everything a referee and a group of players need to create characters, spaceships, and the other essential ingredients of the XXVc game universe.

Players can choose from several races for their characters, including true humans (Terrans); mildly gene-altered Mercurians and Lunarians; and semihumans such as Delphs, who populate the ocean depths, and Tinkers, specially designed for situations calling for small size and extraordinary dexterity.

Every character has a career: rocket-jock, rogue, warrior, scout, medic, or engineer. Just as in other role-playing games, a party of adventuring characters has a better chance of succeeding if a variety of careers are represented in the group. And for even further variety, each character has a wide range of skills to choose from. The process of creating a talented and powerful party of player characters can almost be a game in itself—but that's really only a minor prelude to the action that awaits the party.

The rule book also tells you everything you need to know about spaceships; ranging from the smallest fighters to the biggest battlers: how they work, what they cost, what each type can and can't do. Operating a ship is one of the most important things a group of player characters will do, whether they're just trying to get from one place to another or whether they're bearing down on an enemy vessel

in the blackness of space.

And that's where the "Combat" part of the book comes in. The rules include complete information for handling ship vs. ship battles as well as combat on an individual level. Ship armament ranges from blistering laser beams to immensely powerful kinetic cannons that can obliterate a small vessel in one shot. In the category of personal weapons, the old standbys—knives, clubs, swords—are still around and still able to do damage. Sometimes, in the urban wasteland of an Earth city or the airless, lightless void of an asteroid mining outpost, these will be the best (and only) weapons available. At other times, when the items and their power supplies are available, characters will want to arm themselves with the high-tech weapons of the 25th century such as laser pistols, sonic stunners, and rifles that fire tiny rockets with their own internal guidance systems.

Players and referees who are familiar with the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system will immediately recognize a lot of similarity between that game and the XXVc game rules. Obviously, this is no accident. We used this approach in the design of the XXVc game for two good reasons. First, we know from years of experience (yours and ours) that the AD&D® game *works*, and we could do a lot worse than building upon the quality of an established winner. Second, the many thousands of people who have played and enjoyed the AD&D game will find it very easy to make the transition to the XXVc game system; the concepts are very much the same, even though the particulars are very different.

The World Book: This is what the 25th century is all about—at least, as much of that information as we could stuff into a 64-page book. Here you'll find full statistics and descriptions of every place—from Mercury out to the moons of Saturn—that has been investigated, exploited, and transformed during mankind's exodus from Earth.

What is life like on Venus, where only the highest mountaintops can support anything resembling "normal" life and the acidic morass of the lowlands is home to a bizarre race of reptilian humanoids? What about Mars, the planet that has been most drastically changed, with its massive urban complexes and its majestic space elevator? And what about the asteroid belt, where the true individualists of the solar system have managed to keep their independence and form a strong community at the same time?

All of these places, and dozens of others, are brought to life in the World Book. By putting together facts from each description, you'll get a picture of how the various alliances and conflict situations all fit together, and you'll see a multitude of ways in which player characters can affect the balance of power. The adventuring possibilities are practically unlimited.

And to help the referee take advantage of those possibilities, the World Book also includes a section on how to construct your own adventures for the XXVc game—general guidelines, combined with some specific advice, that will have a group of players immersed in the vibrant game universe faster than you can say "Prepare for liftoff!"

Better yet: To really get you playing quickly, the World Book contains a complete short adventure, "Ghost in the Machine," designed to enable a group to be playing the game literally within minutes after the box is opened. When you get this brief taste of what adventuring in the XXVc game universe is like, you'll be even more eager to cook up ideas of your own.

The Technology Book: A close companion to the World Book, this piece of the package is 32 pages of statistics and descriptions that detail the science and technology of the 25th century. Here's where you'll find out about terraforming, the special ways in which mankind has tackled the task of making other worlds habitable; orbital colonies, the "cities in space" that date back to the earliest days of interplanetary exploration; and the advances in medicine and biotechnology that have made the term "minor injury" practically obsolete.

Most of the Technology Book is devoted to the gadgetry and gear that's available to spacefaring adventurers in the 25th century. For instance, there are: "smart clothes" with integrated wiring that provides heating and cooling, electronic shielding, and other features; security devices and ship sensors; and spacesuits and other types of armor and protection.

And, of course, weapons—specifically, the devices that have been developed since the 20th century and which have made so-called "conventional" guns and ammunition a thing of the past. What are the advantages of a heat gun over a laser pistol, and vice versa? When is a rocket pistol a good thing to have, and when would a sonic stunner be a lifesaver instead? By reading about the weaponry of the 25th century, with each item described in game terms, players will be able to answer these questions before they equip their characters for an expedition into the unknown.

The maps: The XXVc game box contains four poster-size maps in full color, each one designed for use in certain adventuring situations.

For exploring in a modern city unlike any place on Earth, there's an overhead view of the Tycho Spaceport, one of the showpieces of present-day civilization on the moon.

When characters are aboard a ship, their locations and activities can be tracked on a map sheet that includes cross-section views of the various compartments of two typical ship types. All of the cross-section maps on this sheet are scaled for use with 25mm miniatures.

For getting from one place to another across the vastness of space, you'll make use of the solar system display that records the location and movement of the four inner planets plus major outposts in the asteroid belt. Also in the box is a special "ruler" that's used to chart courses between the planets and help you figure out how long it will take to get from one world to another.

Finally, for those inevitable and exciting battles between ships, we've taken a section of space and marked it off with a hex grid, so that you can keep track of who's doing what to whom while fighters, cruisers, and battlers zip around from place to place in the arena of combat.

The counters: The tools you use to keep track of ships and planets are part of a sheet of die-cut counters that's also in the box. The counter sheet also includes dozens of number markers that have a variety of possible uses: the amount of money a character is carrying, the amount of damage a ship has taken, the number of hit points your character has lost—for any instance where you need to keep track of numbers.

The cards: The 24 full-page cards in the XXVc game box are both colorful and functional. Seven of them contain full-color portraits plus brief biographies and game statistics for major nonplayer char-

acters in the XXVc game universe. There's Buck Rogers, of course, plus good guys like Dr. Huer and Wilma Deering, and bad guys like Simund Holzerhein and Killer Kane. If you're familiar with any of the other BUCK ROGERS® game products and books that TSR has published, then you already know what these characters are like. If you aren't familiar with them already, you'll be getting to know them quite well in the very near future.

Thirteen of the cards contain portraits and full statistics for spaceships, ranging from specific vessels such as Killer Kane's scout cruiser *Rogue* to generic types such as the massive battlers that RAM uses to "keep the peace." Each ship card has a schematic diagram of its various compartments, which is used along with the number markers to keep track of damage that the vessel takes during combat.

On the other four cards are full-color maps of Mars, Venus, Earth, and Luna (the moon), showing the locations of each world's major cities, spaceports, and other physical features. As you get deeper and deeper into the XXVc game milieu, the place names on Mars will become as real—and at least as important—as the places of Earth are right now.

The screen: To prevent everyone from having to flip through the rule book while a horde of RAM troopers is coming over

the hill, we've taken all of the important tables and statistical information and displayed them on a six-panel foldout screen that the referee and the players can use to find out something in a hurry. The screen won't stop a laser blast, but it can stand up in front of the referee to keep the players' prying eyes from seeing what he's up to.

And finally, the dice: For those who are new to the hobby of role-playing games, or those who can never have enough dice, the box also includes an assortment of the world's best random-number generators. You see, even with all of the advances in technology since the 20th century, the only way to get a truly random number from one to whatever is to pick up a whatever-sided die and roll it across the table.

It's nice to know that, even after four and a half centuries, some things haven't changed. Ω

Oops!

The address of artist Robin Wood was misspelled in DRAGON® issue #152, in "Worth a Thousand Words." Her correct address is:

Robin Wood
15981 Woodland Drive
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BUCK IS BACK!

Buck Rogers rockets into the future with wild new projects

by Brad Munson

In the last moments of the 20th century, the world unexpectedly trembles on the brink of war. A huge and sinister orbiting battle platform, Masterlink, is poised to obliterate the Free World—and only Buck Rogers, America's finest pilot, possesses the skill, the courage, and the technology to stop a world war before it begins.

He succeeds—but dies in the attempt. Or seems to die, at any rate.

Five hundred years pass, and the world changes. Humanity spreads to the near planets—to Mars, to Venus, to Mercury and the asteroid belt. The planets themselves are terraformed, even as Earth is virtually destroyed by blind exploitation. And a vast corporation, RAM, comes to rule the majority of human society with ruthless and brutal calculation.

Then, quite impossibly, Buck Rogers returns from the dead. His frozen body, cryogenically preserved for almost 500 years, is found floating in the asteroid belt. And though the world he enters is entirely different from the world he left behind, he finds himself at the center of the action, as always. Buck Rogers becomes a hero for the forces of liberation, a hated enemy of the oppressive RAM, and the last hope of a dying Earth.

The adventures of Buck Rogers and the rich and strange worlds of the 25th century are the basis of a wide new selection of TSR game products and publications: comics modules, paperback novels, computer games, and the XXVc™ role-playing game, with modules and supplements of its own.

Buck's adventures will appear in the monthly *BUCK ROGERS® Comics Module*, a combination of comics stories and games that explores the worlds of the XXVc game in depth. Paul Smith follows Buck into the future, pencilling the new stories to be written by John Moore, a popular new comics writer best known for his work on First Comics' *American Flagg!* and DC

Comics' *Superboy* comic-book series. Also included is a bonus back-up story by Buzz Dixon, as he follows Black Barney and the crew of the spacecraft *Free Enterprise* in their own escapades, drawn by comics cult favorite Stan Woch (*Airboy*) and inked by Rick Magyar (*Maze Agency*, among others).

The *BUCK ROGERS Comics Module* is part of a five-title series of new publications premiering in June. And all the monthly Comics Modules include free-standing games that can be played immediately, without additional material or rules, as well as supplements to TSR's most popular role-playing games and board games. That's a powerful combination of stories and art by the comics' best talents and brand-new games by the best designers in the business.

And that's only the beginning. Strategic Simulations, Inc., creators of the best-selling computer games based on TSR's AD&D® game, enters the 25th century with a *BUCK ROGERS™* computer game as well. Set in the future after the Martian Wars, it follows a crew of rebels who discover a terrifyingly powerful derelict spaceship in the ruins orbiting Earth. The rebels must fight to understand it, control it, and keep it from returning to RAM. As richly detailed as SSI's other products, this game promises to create a whole new type of role-playing and computer game for science-fiction fans, computer gamers, and role-playing enthusiasts alike.

Meanwhile, the *BUCK ROGERS™* novels continue with a new trilogy premiering in summer 1990. *First Power* begins a few months after the Martian Wars, as NEO faces the challenge of rebuilding Earth, and as Mercurian prince and NEO ally Kemal Gavilan returns to his forsaken royal family to learn what he can about a sinister new weapon. *Prime Squared* continues the pursuit of the evil forces vying to control the colossal laser device that

Kemal has found and now must destroy. Unexpected changes in characters and political forces come to a head in *Matrix Cubed*, as Kemal is caught between a rock and a hot place, but manages to bring the trilogy to a searing conclusion.

The most exciting part of the Buck Rogers revolution in 1990 must be the premiere of the XXVc science-fiction role-playing game. Created by award-winning game designer Mike Pondsmith (creator of the CYBERPUNK game), this amazing new RPG includes complete information on characters, worlds, and technologies only touched upon in the novels and comics. The game also gives the structure for a remarkable new role-playing and combat system. Buck is only one of hundreds of amazing characters and creatures that inhabit the future, and they're all available in the XXVc game of strategy, intrigue, combat, and conquest.

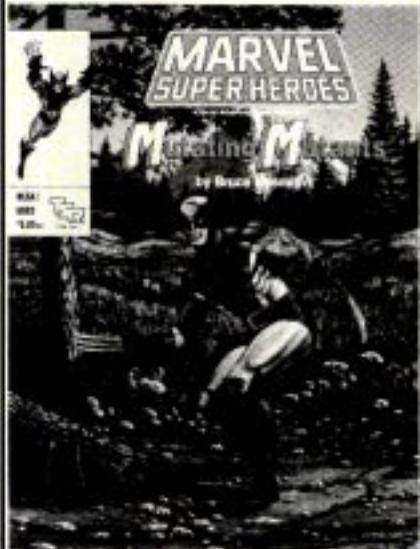
The XXVc game premieres in May 1990. Only a few weeks later, the first of the modules and accessories will appear, with new products following almost every month thereafter. *BUCK ROGERS in the 25th Century* (July) offers a set of modules for beginning players. *Mars in the 25th Century* (August) is an accessory that explores the richest planet in the inner solar system—the perfect source for a new RPG experience. *NEO in the 25th Century* (October), another introductory module, focuses on the one group of freedom fighters that stands between the ruined Earth and the forces of RAM. Finally, a new accessory called *Earth in the 25th Century* (November) gives gamers all the details on the good, bad, and ugly planet Earth.

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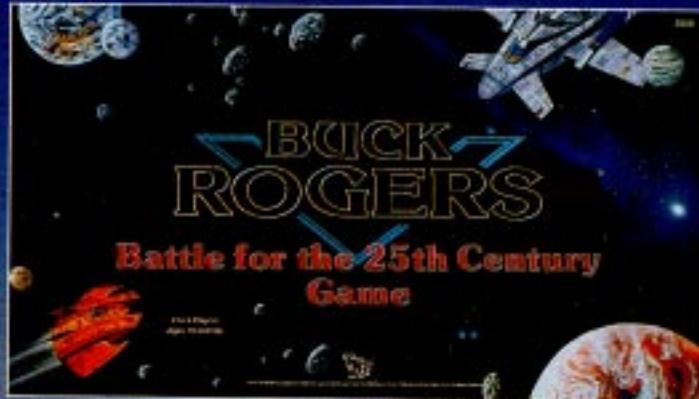
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BUCK ROGERS FLIES SOLO

Solitaire play for the
BUCK ROGERS™: Battle for the 25th Century game

by Ed Greenwood

Into every gamer's life falls a little "alone time," those frustrating periods when one itches to play a game—and has no one to play against. Every gamer has favorite solitaire games, and there are a few excellent solitaire war games available, but it's sometimes fun to take a new game (particularly one that doesn't seem readily adaptable to solitaire play) and while away a few hours "going it alone."

So here on the games shelves at the cottage, staring me in the face, is a big, colorful game in a huge box: TSR's BUCK ROGERS™: Battle for the 25th Century game. Why not give it a try?

Setup

First, set up the board and put the markers on the Solar System Display in the usual manner. Deal out six Territorial Zone Cards for all six Leaders. You play Buck, and you set up your starting army (its composition is given on page 9 of the Basic Game Rules booklet) in the strongest setup you can devise, subject to the standard placement restrictions (also on page 9). You can't change your initial setup after you begin setting up the forces for the other Leaders!

After setting out Bucks forces, distribute the other Leaders' starting armies in the same way, with the following guidelines:

1. The Leader must be guarded by five friendly units in the same zone, and must be located in a Zone on the largest planet for which the Leader has a card in his hand.

2. In all cases, the "largest" planetary body is the one with the greatest number of Territorial Zones (for counting purposes, include the Space Elevator as one zone, but don't count Moon Zones or Colonies). Earth is considered larger than Venus.

3. Each Leader unit will be located on the largest Moon if there are no planetary Territorial Zone Cards in that Leader's hand, on a Colony if no Moon Zone Card is held, or (failing that) on an Asteroid. Luna is considered to be a Moon, not a planetary body.

This quite often leads to all the Leaders being crammed onto Earth, so another rule should be added: If two Leaders (including Buck) are already placed on a planet, additional Leaders should be located on other planets if they have relevant Zone Cards (even if they also hold

cards for larger planets).

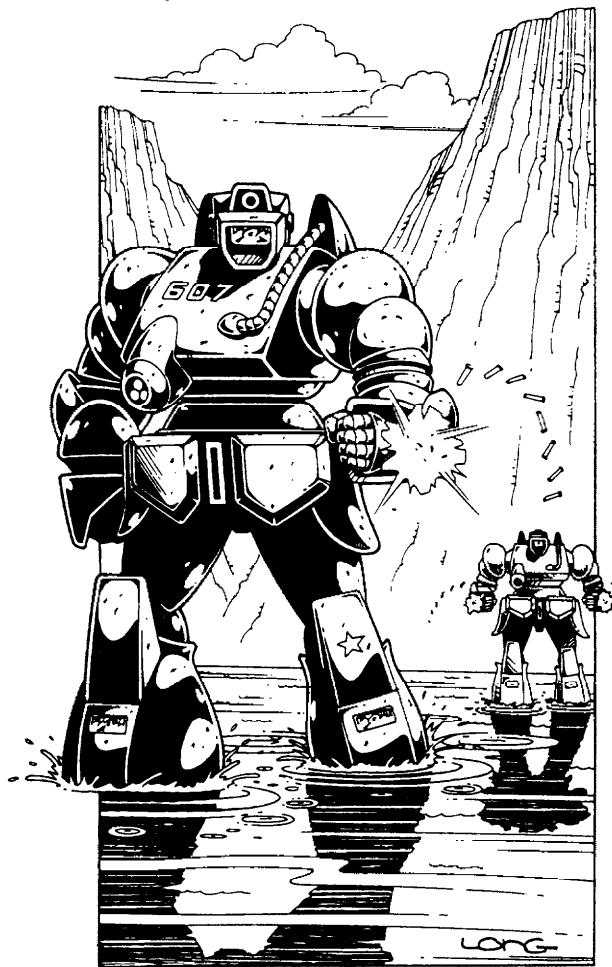
4. Control Markers should be placed for all forces. A pencil and paper are also necessary for keeping track of turns.

Rules

This solitaire game uses the Basic Game Rules (i.e., no special Leader powers), with the following additions from the Advanced Rules: Pass-Through Fire and Spaceship Movement (both on page 4 of the Advanced/Optional Game Rules booklet), and Control Markers In Combat, with its Advanced CRT (page 5 of that rulebook).

Except for their first turn of movement, and except for newly produced units (discussed later), no "enemy" Leaders or their ground forces move from zone to zone in the game. Any enemy forces will attack Buck's (your) forces whenever any of Bucks units end up in the same zone, in their respective turns. If necessary, use the Turn Cards to determine the order in which units of the various enemy Leaders attack.

All possible attacks including Pass-Through Fire will be made, by all enemy units, on Bucks forces throughout the game: enemy units never break off at-



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tacks. Buck's units can always break off combat and pull back from any combat in which they are losing.

Enemy spaceship movement takes place throughout the game, in the usual turn-phase, always to pursue and attack Buck's closest forces (if forces are equidistant, roll dice to determine which is attacked). Enemy units will ignore units belonging to all other enemy Leaders; no combat or Pass-Through Fire between such units will occur. Movement follows Advanced "Ship Movement" rules.

Newly produced enemy units (you must always produce the units of which that Leader has the fewest, at his factories) may move in their turn as follows: if a ship, to the nearest Orbital Zone; if a Trooper or Gennie, the unit may move at the usual rate of one zone per turn, subject to the usual rules of combat when entering an occupied hex. A Trooper or Gennie may travel to any Territorial Zone in the same System Display (if a Transport is available) where that Leader's forces are most in need of reinforcement—usually but not always the Zone where the Leader is located.

Buck's forces always move first. At the end of Buck's moves and attacks (including the resolution of any Pass-Through Fire), each enemy Leader's forces move (if possible), attack (if possible), and produce units from their factories. The solitaire player

Victory Table

Resounding victory	16 turns or less
Clear victory	17-19 turns
Bare victory	20-21 turns
Skin-of-the-teeth victory	22 turns
Holding one's own	23 turns
A bad day	24 turns
Defeat	25 turns +, or Buck Rogers killed

then marks off one elapsed turn. Don't forget to move the markers on the Solar System Display in the usual manner.

Winning

The object of the game is for Buck to eliminate all other Leaders, Wilma Deering last. Leader units stay dead, once killed, but their forces still left on the board fight on.

Wilma must be captured (on the board, this is the same as "killed") after all other leaders have been eliminated. Wilma's forces will fight Buck's forces throughout the game.

The level of victory achieved depends upon how quickly all five rival leaders are killed or captured. See the Victory Table for details.

Optional rules

1. *Initial forces:* A Leader plus any 15 units are deployed at the start of the game, for each army. Deploy them according to the guidelines under "Setup" above, but determine the composition of the forces randomly (you can choose Buck's 15 units freely). The random-system results (roll 1d10) are as follows:

- 1—Battler
- 2—Transport
- 3—Fighter
- 4—Trooper
- 5—Trooper
- 6—Trooper
- 7—Fighter
- 8—Transport
- 9—Gennie
- 0—Gennie (or roll again twice, ignoring this result hereafter; note that this means a starting force of 16 units, against 15 for other armies)

2. *Fast Game:* This game ends when the Earth completes one revolution around the Sun (i.e., returns to its marked starting location on the Solar System Display). Determine the game outcome as follows:

Victory: Buck has killed three or more rival Leaders

Break even: Buck has killed two rival Leaders

Defeat: One or no rival Leaders were killed, or Buck was killed

3. *Factories:* One or two initial factories for each Leader (including Buck) are granted—but no replacement or additional factories can be built. Buck's factories build whatever the player wants. A rival Leader's factories will build either Fighters or Troopers (roll even/odd to determine which).

4. *No factories:* No factories are allowed for anybody in the game. Note: This can make it very difficult for Buck to win in the time limits given above. A two to four-turn extension to the Victory Conditions may be preferred. Ω

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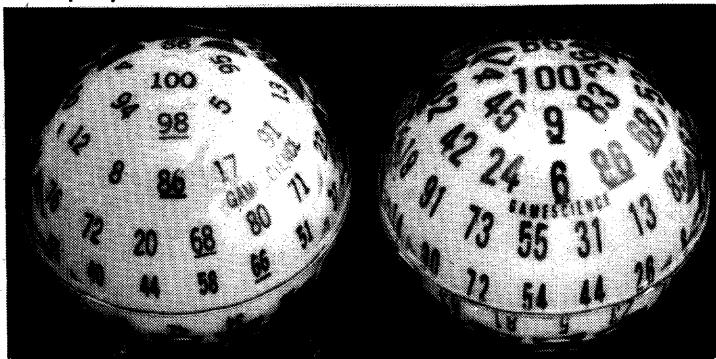
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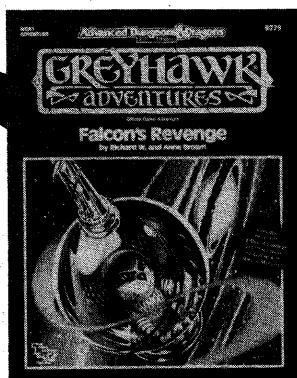
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For the Greater Good

A new Force Power for West End Games' STAR WARS® system

by Carl Sargent

The budding Jedi has a major problem at the heart of his being and role in West End Games' STAR WARS® role-playing system. As the rule book says, The Force is created and sustained by life, and to kill is wrong. But it is often necessary to kill in self-defense or in protection of others, and for the greater good. This is obviously a painful and difficult dilemma. Weighing up actions for the "greater good" is especially difficult since a Jedi may not always be certain what the greater good is in a high-pressure situation, and as any undergraduate philosophy student could tell you, using the greater good as a universal guide to behavior never works anyway. Of course, the Game Master can help out by giving warnings about possible Dark Side points, but things really shouldn't get to this stage. The judgments of a Jedi Knight should be governed by less heavy-handed considerations.

Here, I suggest a new Force power that may help Jedi Knights with this dilemma (at least a little). Some clarification and expansion of an existing power is also given, to help the Jedi know when he's up against a really bad guy.

Control + Sense + Alter Power

Alter Damage

Control Difficulty Number: 10

Sense Difficulty Number: 10

Alter Difficulty Number: 5 for incapacitate = wound, 10 for mortal wound = incapacitate

Effect: This Power may be used only when the Jedi is fighting with his lightsaber, since this totemic weapon is one with which the Jedi strongly identifies and through which Force manipulation is easiest. At the GM's option, this Power could be used with other hand-held weapons, but modifiers for proximity should be added, plus an additional + 5 (at least) to the difficulty rating for Control and Alter.

Using this Power, the Jedi may be able to reduce damage inflicted by the lightsaber, which is a truly lethal weapon in the hands of the Jedi with a fair Control skill. By Sensing, the Jedi empathically knows how much life energy (Strength) his opponent has. Control and Alter are used to reduce the damage the weapon inflicts, so that a murderous wound may be reduced



Illustration by Stephen Schwartz

to one that is less likely to severely damage the opponent. In almost all cases, it is likely that the Jedi will want to use this Power to reduce a mortally wounding strike to an incapacitating one, so that he does not kill his opponent but only renders him incapable of attacking.

If Control and Alter checks are made, the Jedi may alter the damage inflicted by the following amount: the damage rolled on his control dice for damage, minus the Alter difficulty number.

Example: A Jedi with Control Skill of 3D strikes a Stormtrooper with his lightsaber, inflicting a total of 8D damage; 5D are rolled for the weapon for a total of 16, and 3D for Control, for a total of 15—a grand total of 31. Since the Stormtrooper is a real weakling, even with his armor his effective Strength is only 10. The damage exceeds Strength by a factor of over 3, so the Stormtrooper is mortally wounded and will almost certainly die. The Jedi has pity for this unfortunate, who is only conditioned cannon fodder, and he wishes to avoid inflicting such a dire wound. His Alter difficulty number is 10, and a check on his Alter skill allows him to use the Alter Damage power. Since he rolled 15 for his Control when inflicting damage,

he can subtract 5 points (15 - 10) from the damage inflicted, so that total damage is 26 points. This leaves the Stormtrooper incapacitated, but nowhere as close to death as a 31-point hit would have left him!

This Power *cannot* be used to reduce damage from a parrying defender who cuts himself on a lightsaber, nor to affect the damage from blasters, etc.,

that is reflected from the lightsaber back at the firer.

Modifiers for proximity are not used (obviously, since this power only applies to hand-to-hand combat), nor are relationship modifiers applied—all the Jedi is sensing is some quality of life energy, which is a fairly elemental quality to sense. A practical point is that

damage dice for the weapon, and for the Jedi's Control skill, must be recorded separately!

A Jedi should be able to use this Power, as befits a power usable only by those who have shown that they have the purity of intention and heart necessary for following the Jedi path.

Sense Power

Life Sense

Clarification/Expansion: Finally, let's consider the other end of the spectrum, after seeing how compassionate Jedi can avoid killing hapless enemies who are really only cannon fodder. The *real* enemies in the STAR WARS saga are, as the game book rightly reminds us, utter swine, and the worst of the lot are Darth Vader and those who use the Dark Side of the Force. A Jedi should not enjoy killing such swine, of course, but a Jedi certainly need have little compassion for vile enemies. Here, the Life Sense Power from the game book needs extra detailing, since recognition of the arch-enemy is something that a Jedi, as a servant of the Force, should have a good chance of doing.

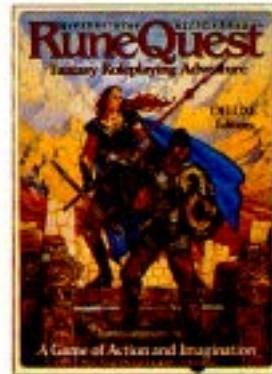
First, Life Sense should be *reflexive*—that is, the player should not need to say that his character is using it in order for it to function. Instead, the GM should secretly check when a user of the Force is in the vicinity.

Second, if the character being sensed is of the "other side" (a servant of the Dark Side for a Jedi), then the Difficulty Number for detection is *reduced by the number of Dark Side points the target has* (this could be applied to deliberate sensing of any character, and not just reflexive detection of Vader types). The Jedi should not, however, know exactly whom he is detecting unless that person is very well known to him. The detector simply knows that there is a disturbance in the Force, and that it is caused by one who is evil. Vader may have known that Obi-Wan caused a disturbance in the Force in the first *Star Wars* movie when he got aboard the Death Star, but this was presumably due to personal familiarity (or logical inference).

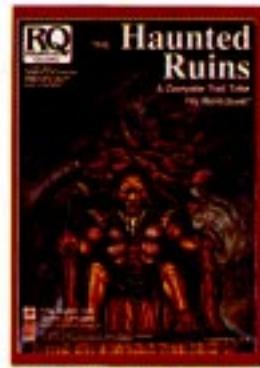
Third, the rule book does not say whether a Jedi with Life Sense has any idea of how far away the person sensed is, or in what direction he is, which are points that certainly require clearing up. I suggest that direction is unknown to the one who is sensing unless he is in close proximity to the target—100 meters or closer—but that the Jedi should have a fair idea of the distance involved (give an error of 0-50% either way, using 1d6 - 1 and multiplying by 10).

This slight expansion of Life Sense may be important for the Jedi. Knowing that one is physically near and may soon be facing an arch-villain may affect the Jedi's actions considerably. Clearing up matters of direction and location with Life Sense are important in any event.

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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

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This month, the sage continues his tour of the AD&D® 2nd Edition game, with special attention on the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* (PHB).

Can a simulacrum be healed with a cure light wounds spell? How would a spell such as enlarge affect a simulacrum? Can a character detect a simulacrum just by talking to it awhile? How do spells like dispel magic and anti-magic shell affect simulacra? Since simulacra are made of snow, are they especially susceptible to fire or heat?

A *simulacrum*, once completed, is a creature—not an object—made of nonliving matter; it's a construct something like a golem. Most spells that affect creatures also affect *simulacra*. Spells like *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *haste*, and *protection from normal missiles*, which affect only creatures, also work on *simulacra*. So do spells like *charms* and *holds*, if the creature that the *simulacrum* duplicates can be affected by those spells.

A *simulacrum* is composed entirely of nonliving matter and is not truly alive. Consequently, curative spells do not work on *simulacra*, and repairing damage done to them is a difficult and costly process (see the PHB, page 186). (In the AD&D 1st Edition game, a *simulacrum* could be enlarged or reduced at the lower, nonliving matter rate.) *Simulacra* do not need to breathe or eat, though they usually do so to avoid detection.

Once completed, a *simulacrum* cannot be dispelled or rendered nonfunctional by a *dispel magic* spell. *Anti-magic shells* keep *simulacra* and other magically created creatures at bay (see the PHB, page 173), but *protection from evil* in any form does not. A *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell can destroy *simulacra* just as it can destroy magical items; the creature's chance to resist the *disjunction* is based on its creator's level (or on level 14, if the creator's level is unknown).

Simulacra usually cannot be detected by nonmagical means, since each one is a

functioning replica of some creature; however, the replica's degree of accuracy is variable (see the PHB, page 186), and the DM might give players subtle clues as to the creature's actual nature. Very poor *simulacra* (having less than 55% of the original's hit points and knowledge) probably shy away from flame or intense heat, and they might speak in monotones. Characters who are quite familiar with the original creature should have no problem finding gaps in the *simulacrum's* knowledge, as even the best *simulacrum* has only 65% of the copied creature's knowledge and personality, but all such clues to the creature's true nature should be provided through role-playing. For example, a *simulacrum* of a character might lack the original's zest for apple cider, lack an unusual nonweapon proficiency, and lack the original's distaste for undercooked meat. Only very perceptive players should be able to detect a *simulacrum* in this manner.

On the Thieving Skill Armor Adjustments table in the PHB (table 29, page 39), is the "Elven Chain" column for magical or nonmagical elven chain mail?

The information in the "Elven Chain" column applies to both magical and nonmagical armor. Though enchanted armor is easier to wear than nonmagical armor (see the encumbrance rules, PHB, page 79), enchantment doesn't reduce the armor's effect on thieving abilities.

Does a spell-caster who is casting a spell in melee have to concentrate so hard that he loses his dexterity bonus to armor class? Do attackers get a to-hit bonus vs. a spell-caster who is casting a spell? Can a mage cast more than one spell in a melee round?

Spell-casting requires considerable—but not total—concentration. Spell-casting negates dexterity bonuses to armor class, but does not otherwise make the caster easier to hit. Most DMs allow spell-casters to defend normally after a spell is completed, so that the caster can use his dexterity bonus (if any) against any attacks made then. It usually isn't possible for any kind of spell-caster to cast two or more spells in the same melee round, even if the caster is using a *haste* spell or potion of speed.

If a mage gets a magical item, such as an *ioun stone* that increases his intelligence, does his chance to learn new spells and maximum number of spells per level increase? Does he immediately get to try learning spells he has "missed" before? What happens to his spell books if he loses the item? Does a mage have to delete spells from his book if an item, creature, or curse lowers his intelligence score?

Even temporary increases in a magic user's intelligence score increase the character's chance to learn spells. (The increase provided by an *ioun stone* is

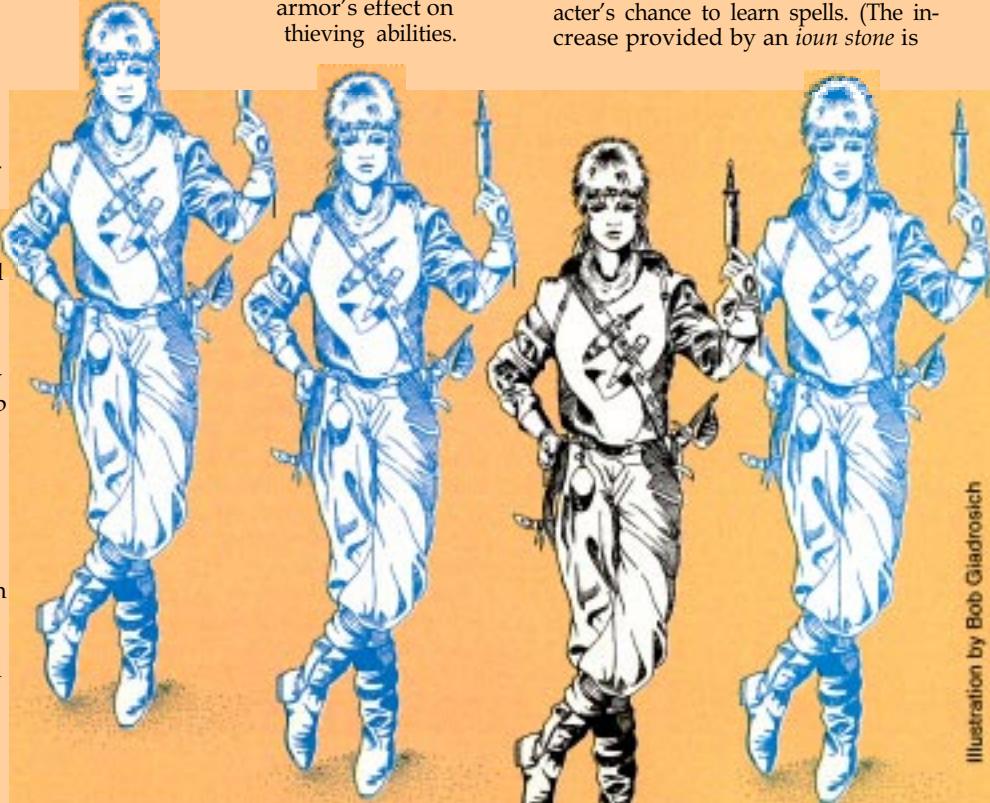


Illustration by Bob Giadrosich

temporary because it lasts only as long as the character keeps and uses the item.) The character cannot immediately try to relearn spells he has failed to learn before, but he can try them again at his increased success chance when he gains a new experience level (see the *PHB*, page 16). The maximum spells per level rule is optional. If your campaign uses it, the character's spell limit increases along with his intelligence. If the character manages to learn a new spell and write it into his book while his intelligence score is temporarily raised, it stays there even if his intelligence subsequently drops. Intelligence losses of any kind do not affect spell books. However, the DM could rule that not every spell could be replaced if the character's spell book is lost or destroyed and had to be reconstructed.

Table 19 (page 29), Ranger Followers, does not give levels for followers with character classes.

Cleric and druid followers are of levels 2-5. Other single-classed followers are of levels 1-6. Multiclassed followers have 1-3 levels in each class.

Can thieves use shields? Bards are specifically prohibited from using shields on page 41 of the *PHB*, but no such restriction is listed with the thief armor information on page 38. I notice that table 38, Thieving Skill Armor Adjustments, has no entry for shields.

Thieves cannot use shields; only leather, studded leather, padded leather, or elven chain armor is acceptable.

If a spell-caster decides to cast a spell, but then loses initiative and is hit in combat, his spell fizzles. Are such spells lost until the caster can memorize them again? What if the caster is using a magical item? Can spell-casters who have their spells ruined attack the same round as the spells were lost?

Spells and scrolls are used up and lost if they are disrupted during casting. Some magical items require a "casting" procedure that can also be disrupted; these include wands, staves, and rods if the command word optional rule is in effect. (This assumes that the "command word" is actually a phrase or rhyme; perhaps the wielder must actually accompany the speaking of the phrase or rhyme with some kind of somatic gestures.) If wand, stave, or rod use is disrupted, the appropriate charges are expended and lost. Rings, weapons, armor, and miscellaneous magical items generally have very short command words or sequences (if they have any at all) and usually cannot be disrupted. Some wands, staves, and rods that are usable by non-spell-casters, such as the *rod of lordly might* and *wand of secret door and trap location*, tend to have very simple command words or sequences

and also cannot be disrupted. Spell-casting and magical-item use count as actions. A character cannot perform a second action in the same round even if the spell or item's effect is disrupted.

The rules in both editions of the AD&D game say that paladin must give 10% of his income to a charitable institution. What defines income? My DM says income is all money and wealth the paladin has, so my paladin tithes part of the same money again and again. Would nonmonetary wealth (such as a mount, property, or armor) be included in income?

Income is, literally, incoming or "new" wealth. Savings, equipment, and property are not income. As explained in the AD&D 2nd Edition rules, however, tithing is not the limit of a paladin's largess (see the *PHB*, page 28). The 10% tithe is paid immediately before the paladin does *anything* else with his income. After his tithes and expenses are paid, a paladin is obligated to donate the rest to a worthy cause.

Can the armor class bestowed by a shield spell be enhanced with rings of protection, bracers of defense, or other protective items?

No. The caster gets the armor class bestowed by the spell, or his own current armor class as modified by magic and dexterity, whichever is better vs. any given attack. However, the spell's saving-throw bonus is cumulative with dexterity and magic.

Can a mage use a *teleport* spell to travel into and out of a castle built on a drifting cloud? Or would the cloud's motion make teleporting impossible?

Unless there is some outside force preventing it (see the *PHB*, page 172), a character can *teleport* from anywhere. Particularly strict DMs might rule that any momentum the teleporting character has will carry over after the *teleport* is complete. For example, if a wizard *teleports* out of a runaway mine car, he still might be in for a whopping impact at his destination. Unless the DM decides that the magic needed to keep a cloud castle aloft blocks *teleportation*, it is possible to *teleport* to that castle. Motion is not a factor in determining what constitutes a viable destination for a teleport spell. In a sun-centered solar system, every piece of a planet's surface constantly undergoes complex motions as the planet rotates, revolves around its star, and hurtles through space with the rest of the system (not to mention any tectonic motions in the planet's crust). Nevertheless, one can *teleport* to any place on the planet. The key word is "place." A piece of ground, an asteroid, and a castle are all places and thus can be the destinations of a *teleport* spell even if they are in motion. Any other place that can provide a

substantial surface as required in the spell description will also serve. Stability goes hand in hand with substance in this case; a constantly changing surface such as a flowing stream, patch of quicksand, or heaving ship's deck cannot be a destination for a *teleport* spell. Note that carts, wagons, ships, and other conveyances are objects, not "places." A character can *teleport* from such locations, but not to them.

Can normal aging raise a character's ability score above the character's racial maximum? Can it raise a score from 18 to 19?

The rules on ability-score minimums and maximums (see the *PHB*, page 20) make it clear that the limits apply only to characters when they are being created. So if a character actually lives long enough to get an intelligence or wisdom boost (these are the only ability scores that *increase* with age), I see no reason why he shouldn't get the full benefit. Note that magical aging does not improve intelligence and wisdom; only actual life experience does that.

What is the use of taking two or more days to write a scroll into a spellbook when a wizard can just memorize the spell from the scroll?

Scrolls are temporary magical writings good for one—and only one-use. I suppose a wizard could memorize a spell from a scroll, but doing so would use up the scroll, as would writing the scroll's spell into a book. This being the case, I should think the advantage of taking the time to make a permanent record of the spell in a book is obvious.

How much water is created by a reversed transmute water to dust spell?

The reversed spell changes dust, dirt, or mud into water. A wizard can create a 10' cube of water per caster level, provided that enough material is on hand to be transmuted. A priest converts one cubic yard (a cube 3' across each side) per caster level.

Can the caster of the fifth-level priest spell *rainbow* choose a specific arrow even if it is not the "next" in order? What is the order?

Yes, the caster can always choose which arrow to fire, provided it hasn't already been used. The "next" arrow appears automatically only when the caster fails to request a specific color or when he requests a color that has been already used. The arrow-color order is just as listed in the spell description: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

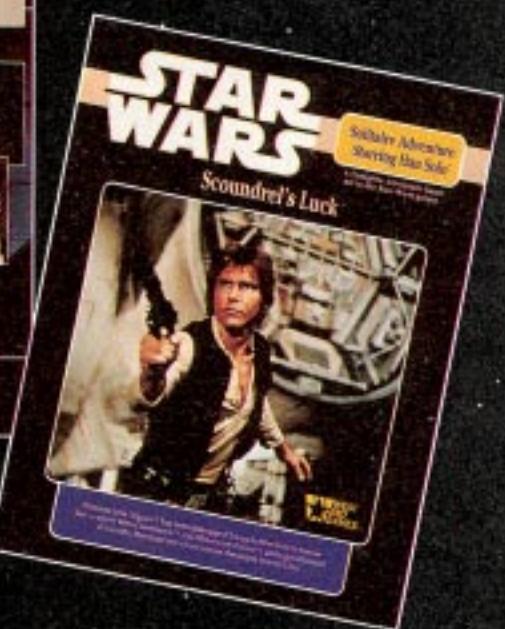
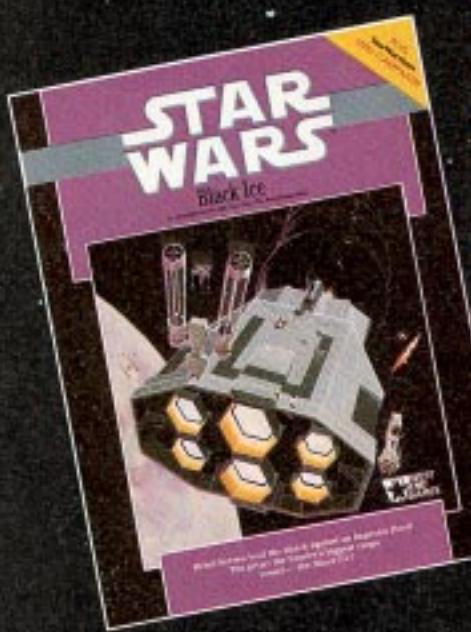
Is magic resistance in the AD&D 2nd Edition game affected at all by the spell-caster's level?

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While attending a game convention in the North Jersey area, I listened in on a tournament being run, and I was disgusted. The scenario sounded interesting, but it was the behavior of the players that shocked me. A young lad, not more than 11 winters old, was being jeered at for every little mistake, every bad die roll, and basically every other thing he did that wasn't his fault. He eventually went into tears (and who would blame him?), and the other players were asked to leave. There was another incident at a bookstore, where a boy of about the same age overheard a conversation about the AD&D® game and jumped between the two to share one of his role-playing endeavors with them. One of them gave him a slight shove and said in a sarcastic tone, "That's very nice, kid." There were many other times, I saw this happen, with the youngster ignored or taunted.

I understand that older gamers (or older people in general, for that matter) might not like playing with those younger than they are for obvious reasons, but human nature doesn't give them the excuse to play the tyrant. Now, let's use our gaming skills for a moment to role-play the youngster. Your older cousin needed an extra player for that one module since it required a greater number of characters. After the session, you're hooked. You gather your allowances and run two miles to the bookstore to purchase the AD&D *Players Handbook*. Then, an incident similar to the one described above happens. How would you feel? You'd probably end up having a bad outlook on gaming and share your opinion with friends, steering them away from it as well.

The point that I'm attempting to make is that younger gamers look up to you (although they may show it in strange ways). If you have the opportunity to show a youngster the ropes, by all means so, for he will introduce his friends to role-playing games, making this one of the best ways to contribute to the hobby.

If you are a victim of age prejudice, don't be discouraged! Most gamers are not like that, and the ones who are probably act that way because they had similar experiences.

Alex Iwanow
East Brunswick NJ

As a female gamer, I've had it up to my eyeballs with the way every role-playing game and miniature company on the market today almost always portrays female characters wearing chain mail bikinis or fur G-strings. Male players may find this attire alluring, but I find it not only sexist but downright unpractical.

This sort of negligee-like armor would not only make a cold-weather campaign next to unbearable, but would be potentially deadly in combat. Those Fredericks of Hollywood getups

would leave vital organs exposed to almost any weapon from swords to pole arms.

Anyone who knows anything about history understands that the few women warriors actually wore full armor. None of them were stupid enough to walk around the battlefield looking like they were posing for *Playboy*. So come on, everybody, give female characters some respect and some clothes.

Amber McKinney
Shamokin PA

I'm writing in response to H. K. McCoy's letter in issue #154 about gaining nonweapon proficiencies using experience points. The idea is a good one and provides for well-rounded PCs, but what I find fault with is the use of a percentage of a level to buy a NWP. Why not just assign an exact experience-point cost to each NWP, based on how difficult the skill is to learn? For example, Fishing and Fire-building, two of the easiest NWPs to learn, could cost 1,000 xp. Riding (Airborne) and Survival (Desert) would be a lot harder to master and would therefore cost more experience points—around 7,000 or more, depending upon the DM.

The reason why I think you shouldn't use a percentage of a level to find the cost of a NWP is that at high levels, it's going to take outrageous amounts of experience points to purchase a new NWP. For example, a 3rd-level fighter can purchase a NWP at 25% level value for 2,500 xp. At 12th level, that same 25% costs him 62,500 xp. Granted, this makes players think twice about buying NWPs at high levels, but what would this accomplish? Nonweapon proficiencies don't affect the game as much as gaining levels does.

Using a percentage of a level for NWP cost also affects the time it takes to get the chance to learn a NWP; the time rises critically when he advances in level, since it takes a lot longer to gain the 62,500 xp needed for the 12th-level fighter to purchase a NWP than it does for the 2,500 xp that your 3rd-level fighter needs. Of course, the question of how much time it takes to actually learn a certain NWP is up to the DM.

Assigning a percentage cost to NWPs also puts AD&D 1st Edition game barbarians at an extreme disadvantage and puts thieves at an extreme advantage, considering the amount of experience points needed for each to advance. Assigning experience-point values to the NWPs keeps this system fair to all involved. Isn't that what we look for in an RPG?

Rocky L. Sharier
Barberton OH

I'm writing in regard to the letter written by Alex Martin from Mesquite, Tex. In issue #152, he explains how he got his parents to feel better about his playing AD&D games. Well, now it's my turn to speak out.

First, I agree with him one hundred percent. My friend and I had our mothers play for short periods of time so that they could tell what it was all about.

Second, I'd like to ask if anyone out there has any idea how the people from the 700 Club and others like that can form an opinion on the game when none, if any, of them have ever had experience playing this superb game.

Third, I'd like to say that the AD&D game has

done a lot of things for me that the skeptics should think about. I have learned to read a lot better, and I've even started a small library of SF books. Plus, I have gotten to know several people that otherwise I wouldn't have ever met.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the group at TSR and all those that were involved in the creation of the AD&D game.

Robert S. Morris, Jr.
Harbor Springs MI

The character knows what the player knows? On page 52-53 of the 2nd Edition *Players Handbook*, it is said as an option that the character knows what the player knows. This is one of the dumbest options I have ever seen. I am 15 years old and have trained in the martial arts for over four years. If I were to use this knowledge as one of my character's nonweapon proficiencies, he alone would offset the balance of the game.

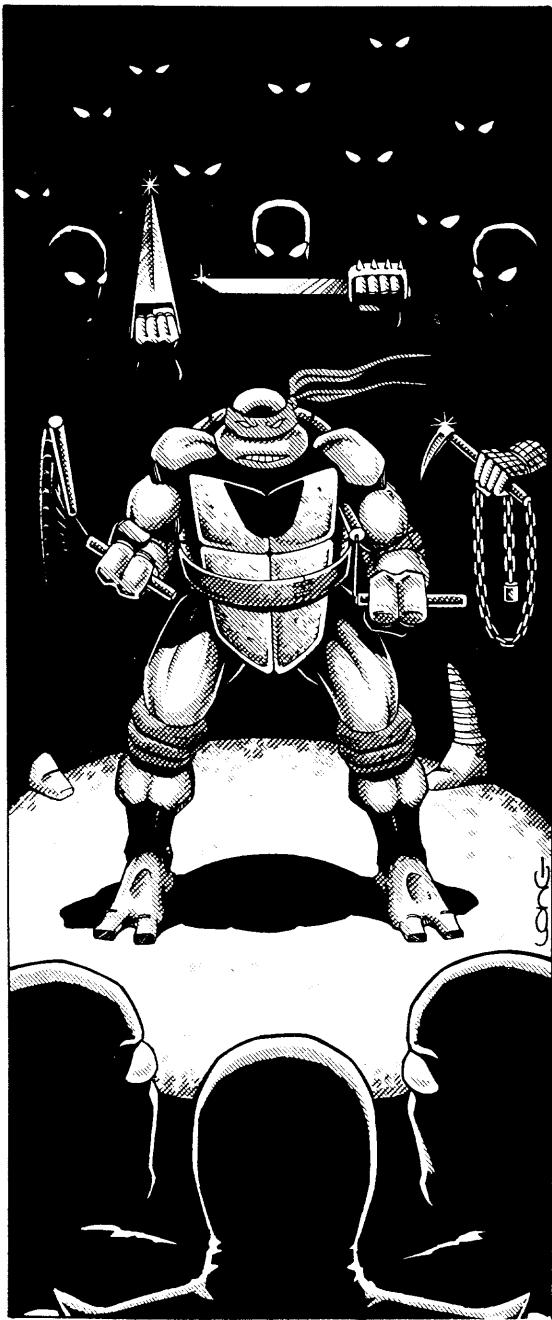
My second point is about players with evil alignments. I thought that this game was about heroes and hierarchs, not killers and cutthroats. The only time I have ever used an evil character was when I was a spy for the DM. [The other players and I] would secretly discuss our plans so as to catch our DM off guard. Fortunately, he was never caught off guard (thanks to me). Just a little advice for those who discuss secrets.

Robert K. Hackett
Dana Point CA

I am writing in response to Jason Dunn's letter in issue #152. Jason is right: Humanoids aren't wimpy if used properly. But he must remember that his example was, as he said, a solo adventure. I have recently purchased GAZ10 *The Orcs of Thar*. This is adaptable to the AD&D game and will prove highly successful in both systems. This supplement lets orcs and other humanoids reach higher hit dice and actually obtain power equal to even the most powerful of characters. This does not make them invincible, but from what I've seen so far, they can be close to it. I have just stocked a dungeon full of these, and I will soon see what my friends think when their 36th-level characters cast a few 20d6 damage fireballs—and these creatures survive! I would recommend using these at high levels, but using normal creatures for lower levels (1-5).

Also, in response to Dan Humphries' letter in the same issue, I would like to say this: I have played both as a player and a DM in both AD&D and D&D games since I was five years old (I am 13 now). I see nothing wrong with having evil or chaotic characters in an adventuring party. I have to admit that when I made my first chaotic character in a D&D game, I was a little shaky. But after a while I got used to it (I changed his alignment soon after; it didn't fit his personality). Then I was introduced to the AD&D game, and I found nothing wrong with evil characters. Sometimes my friends have a hard time playing them, but then I show them the description of evil in the 1st Edition *Players Handbook*, and they get the idea. These characters do tend to try to take over the party, but I find that the evil characters are usually the only ones that have to be assassins, and these aren't strong enough to fight off the good paladins and fighters.

Benson Syphrit
Harvard IL



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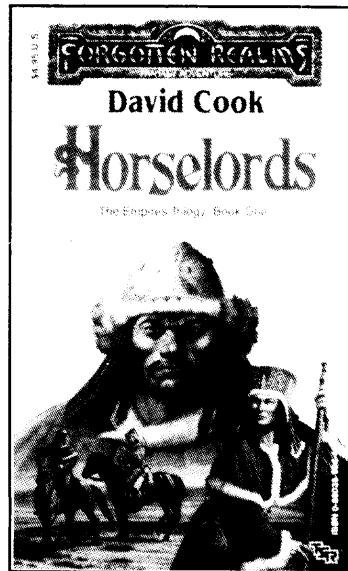
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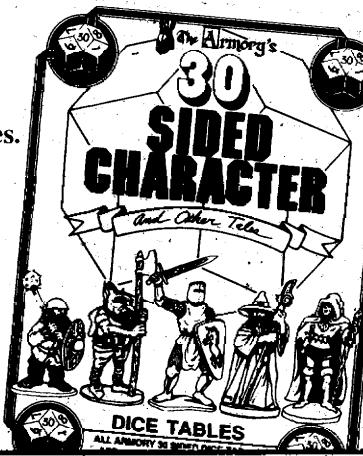


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Where There Is One Sumotori . . .

Oriental Adventures gains a mighty NPC class

by Stewart Wieck

Editor's introduction

Believe it or not, we've received a number of requests for information on sumo wrestlers in the AD&D® 1st Edition *Oriental Adventures* campaign. And we also received two articles on this class, both of which were well written and enjoyable. We had the option of using the "centaur solution" (named for the two articles on centaurs that we turned into one article in DRAGON® issue #103) or the "harpy solution" (for the two separate versions of "The Ecology of the Harpy" that appeared in issue #115). We chose the latter, allowing the readers to pick the version of this wrestler that they liked the best. We hope you enjoy the *shobu*!

The two huge men stamped their feet one last time to bring the Shinto ceremony to a close. Suddenly, by some unspoken agreement, both sprang to their full heights. For such large men, the speed in which this maneuver was executed was astounding. They rushed one another, each from one side of the *dohyo*, meeting in the center of the ring. The collision pitted an overpowering force against an immovable object. A win could only be achieved by outmaneuvering or outwitting the opponent.

The smaller of the two sumotori reached around his opponent's waist until he gained a grip on the *mawashi*, the only clothing that the opponent wore. Arching his back, the smaller wrestler struggled to lift his opponent off the floor. His effort proved successful; the larger man fell to the mat heavily. It had been a long match—nearly 15 seconds in length. As the two huge men left the *dohyo*, they patted one another on the back and went to drink water in peaceful camaraderie.

Such is the scene of a sumo wrestling match, or *shobu*. This article presents the sumo wrestler as an AD&D game character for use in an *Oriental Adventures* game campaign. Before the character class

itself is presented, a little background on sumo wrestling is called for.

In essence, sumo wrestling is a very simple sport. The contestants, called *sumotori*, may grab any part of an opponent's upper body or his *mawashi* (the stiff silk loincloth which is the sumotori's only clothing). The *shobu* is won if either opponent is forced out of the ring or touches any part of his body other than the soles of his feet to the ground. However, there are infinite subtleties involved in sumo

wrestling. Each throw and hold is carefully defined and structured, with 48 of these classical throws documented.

The ring (*dohyo*) in which the *shobu*

Continued on page 37



... There's Bound To Be Another!

An alternate view of the sumo wrestler NPC

by Len Carpenter

The sumotori, or sumo wrestler, is an NPC class commonly encountered in the AD&D® 1st Edition *Oriental Adventures* campaign world. The sumotori is rarely an adventuring character (since the character's abilities are so limited), though he is very powerful in a narrow area of exper-

tise. The only thing a sumotori can do very well is wrestle.

A sumotori makes his living by wrestling in noble courts or popular exhibitions. A sumotori is often part of a court entourage and is paid to wrestle for the entertainment and glory of his daimyo. A sumo

wrestler is considered a great status symbol for a samurai lord, much like owning a champion race horse. To produce a fine sumotori, a daimyo must invest a great many resources to train and feed the wrestler. A court sumotori who becomes renowned for his skill brings honor and



fame to his daimyo as well as himself.

Some sumotori become wandering entertainers. These wrestlers travel from town to town, challenging the local champions to wrestle in open-air matches. It is a hard life for a wandering wrestler, trying to earn enough money to feed his great appetite.

An out-of-work sumotori will occasionally hire himself out as muscle for a yakuza clan or minor official. The wrestler may work as a bouncer, bodyguard, loan collector, or enforcer of his employer's criminal aims.

Only rarely will a sumotori become an adventurer. Although sumotori are a subclass of the bushi class, their warrior skills are poor. Sumotori cannot wear armor or use shields. Each can become proficient with only one weapon regardless of level, but he may choose any weapon with which to become proficient, except for the ninja and martial-arts weapons that require long study. The mace, club, hammer, maul, and tetsubo are typical weapons for sumotori to wield. Sumotori suffer a nonproficiency weapon penalty of -3. They never use oil or poison in combat.

Sumotori use the cleric's combat table, since they are not as adept at fighting as bushi are. Sumotori use 10-sided dice to determine hit points and may advance to a maximum of 8th level. Sumo wrestlers must be lawful in alignment, though they can be good, neutral, or evil.

In all other ways, sumotori are treated as a fighter subclass. Sumotori use the fighter's saving-throw table and may use the magical items allowed to fighters, abiding by the weapon and armor restrictions previously noted.

Sumotori must be strong and hardy; they must also be good pupils in order to learn the art of sumo. The sumotori must have minimum scores of 16 in strength and constitution, and 11 in intelligence and dexterity. The sumotori has no prime requisite and never gains an experience-point bonus for high ability scores. As sumotori advance in level, their strength and constitution scores improve in a manner similar to those of the *Unearthed Arcana* cavalier. Sumotori begin with an initial percentile score following their strength and constitution scores. Upon gaining a new level, a sumotori rolls 2d10 and adds that roll to his percentile score. When the percentile score reaches or exceeds 100, the sumotori's ability score improves by one, just as with a cavalier. The sumotori rolls 2d10 at each new level until the maximum experience level of 8th is attained (see Table 1).

The sumotori's main source of experience points comes through wrestling. A sumotori gains the full-experience point award for a victory in a wrestling match or wrestling combat. Any prizes won or treasure gained through a wrestling victory also carry the full experience-point

awards. If experience points are gained in any other way, the point award is halved. For instance, if a sumotori defeats an ogre by using his wrestling art, he gains the full experience-point award; but if he clubs the ogre to death with a tetsubo, the point award is halved.

Sumotori begin the campaign with an initial base honor score of 20. They gain or lose honor points in wrestling matches with the same honor-point awards given for winning or losing contests (*Oriental Adventures*, page 36).

Upon attaining 8th level, a sumotori may open his own sumo school. The school will attract 10d4 zero-level students, each of whom must spend 5-8 months in rigorous training to become 1st-level sumotori. A sumo school usually requires the support of an important patron, such as a powerful daimyo, wealthy yakuza, or social-climbing merchant. Supporting a respected and prestigious sumo school earns the patron +1 honor point.

Sumotori improve their martial-arts capabilities as they advance in level in a manner somewhat similar to monks. Sumotori martial-arts capabilities are listed in Table 2. Unlike monks, sumotori may study only the martial art of sumai. Sumotori cannot study any other style or mix other special maneuvers into their sumai style. Sumotori must rigidly abide by the training of sumai and cannot develop any new styles (as monks may do). See Tables 3 and 4 for details on sumotori martial arts.

The sumotori's one unique martial-arts ability is the use of his great body mass as an important part of the wrestling art. The sumotori begins his career with a weight of $240 + 1d6$ pounds at 1st level and adds to his weight with each new level attained. The sumotori's great weight benefits him in many ways. It makes the character harder to be moved, provides an advantage in overbearing combat, and makes him so imposing that he may instill fear in lesser folk. At 7th or 8th level, the sumotori becomes monstrously large-larger than even real-world sumo wrestlers. This enormous size makes the character a fair match for any ogre or common oni in a battle of mass and muscle.

Certain special abilities and ki powers of the sumotori require that the character maintains a minimum weight of 250 lbs. If his weight should ever fall below this minimum, he loses some of the abilities described herein.

To maintain his great weight and fighting shape, the sumotori must spend 200 gp (or 400 tael) per level of experience per month in living expenses, most of which goes for food. If the character's weight should ever fall below the 250 lbs. minimum because of famine, disease, imprisonment, or any other reason, the sumotori must spend 300 gp or 600 tael per experience level for a period of one month to eat his way back up to his original weight. A sumotori cannot advance in level until his weight is brought back up to normal. As

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the sumotori is recommended as an NPC class only, the DM is the sole judge of the character's current weight or health.

As sumotori attain higher levels, they acquire the special maneuvers in the order detailed in the special maneuvers list that follows. At 1st level, the sumotori can perform the Choke Hold maneuver, and can deliver a powerful slap equal in effect to an Iron Fist blow. At 2nd level, the sumotori can perform a head slap that has the effect of a Stunning Touch maneuver. The remaining special maneuvers of the sumai art are learned at 3rd through 7th levels.

At 8th level, the sumotori gains a special lock maneuver not described in *Oriental Adventures* —Crushing Hug. The Crushing Hug is a powerful bear-hug hold that, when applied on a successful to-hit roll, inflicts 3-30 hp damage per round until the victim dies or breaks free. The held character may break the hug by making a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. An unsuccessful Crushing Hug results in a -4 penalty to a sumotori's next attack roll. The sumotori must have a minimum weight of 250 lbs. to attempt the Crushing Hug maneuver.

As mentioned earlier, a sumotori's great body mass confers special advantages. The sumotori's great weight reduces the distance the character may be pushed, thrown, or otherwise moved. The sumotori's weight may also provide a bonus to the character's save vs. paralyzation roll when employing the Immobility maneuver. Moreover, this same bonus may be applied to a saving throw to avoid being stunned by a physical attack, since the character's body mass affords greater protection from such martial-arts blows. Table 5 lists the effects of great weight for sumotori characters.

Whenever a Push or Throw maneuver is successfully employed against a sumotori, the sumotori's weight reduces the distance he is moved by the appropriate modifier in Table 5. (The sumotori must have a minimum weight of 250 lbs., of course.) If the modified distance moved is zero feet or less, the sumotori is unmoved—that is, a Concentrated Push or One Finger maneuver has no effect. If the sumotori is hurled or thrown and the modified distance is zero or less, the sumotori is still thrown, but he lands at the thrower's feet. A Hurl maneuver then does only normal damage, and a Great Throw does only double damage, since the thrower cannot manage the full effect of the throw. The reduced distance modifier is always in-effect, even if the sumotori fails his Immobility save.

A massive sumotori also gains the above-mentioned stun bonus to a saving throw when trying to avoid being stunned or incapacitated by a martial artist who rolls an unmodified 20 for his to-hit roll, or who employs a Stunning Touch or Stun Slap maneuver.

Just as do other Oriental characters, sumotori gain certain ki powers. These ki

powers can only be used when the sumotori's weight is above the 250-lb. minimum. In addition, sumotori have a +1 bonus in any psychic duel with a character who is not a sumotori, samurai, or kensai. Against another sumotori or a samurai, only the sumotori's level is considered in the duel. Kensai always retain their +2 bonus in a psychic duel with a sumotori. Furthermore, a sumotori can push his strength up to 18/00 for a number of times per day equal to his level, just as can samurai.

At 7th level, a sumotori can inspire *fear* in a foe of 1 HD or less, similar to a samurai's *fear* power. The opponent is allowed a +2 bonus to the save vs. breath weapon, as a sumotori's *fear* power is not as effective as the samurai's *ki* power.

At 8th level, a sumotori can push his strength up to 19 for a maximum of two times per day, independent of the number of times the character may push his strength up to 18/00.

Since sumotori are such excellent wrestlers, they gain special advantages in wrestling combat. Sumotori gain a +2 to hit in any grappling or overbearing attack on a nonsumotori. Nonsumotori are -2 to hit with either sort of attack on a sumotori. A sumotori may break a grappling hold by making a successful to-hit roll instead of trying to make a successful bend bars/lift gates strength roll.

A sumotori's great strength helps him to resist an overbearing attack. A sumotori may use his to-hit bonus for high strength as an armor class bonus to avoid being overborne. For example, a sumotori with AC 7 and 18/60 strength gets a +2 strength bonus and so is treated as AC 5 when trying to resist being overborne.

When a sumotori's weight exceeds 400 lbs., the sumotori is considered a large-size opponent in overbearing combat for purposes of determining his armor class adjustment for size, regardless of whether the sumotori is the attacker or defender. The sumotori is still man-size when calculating the number of attackers who may overbear on the sumotori. (See the weaponless combat rules on page 106-8 of *Unearthed Arcana* for details.)

The sumo match

A clear distinction must be made between sumai and sumo wrestling. Sumai is a very old wrestling art in Japan that reputedly dates back to a match held in 22 B.C. In sumai, the goal is to slay the opponent in a no-holds-barred combat that employs deadly locks and blows. By the 8th century, the most dangerous locks and holds were forbidden, and the more civilized and stylized art of sumo wrestling gradually evolved. In feudal Japan, female sumo wrestlers were rare but not totally unknown, although modern sumo is strictly a male pursuit.

The traditional sumo match takes place in a circular ring 15' in diameter. A wrestler is defeated if he touches the ground with any part of his body other than his feet, or if he is forced out of the ring. The intent of the match is not to inflict grievous damage to the foe, but to prove one's superiority in mind and body in a highly regulated, disciplined match. A sumo bout is fast and furious, and often ends within seconds. The key to victory is to gain the initiative in each round, so winning the psychic duel that begins the match is crucial.

Before every contest, each wrestler performs a traditional ceremony of ritualistic movements and gestures—an art form in itself—designed to incur divine favor and entertain the truly cultured sumo enthusiasts. The two wrestlers then face off within the ring, assume formal stances, and try to intimidate each other in a form of psychic duel. The loser of the duel does not surrender, but does suffer a -1 penalty to initiative, saving throw, and to-hit rolls. The psychic duel is performed as per the rules on pages 100-101 of *Oriental Adventures*.

After the battle of wills is over, the sumo match begins. Certain special maneuvers are not used in a formal match, either because they are too dangerous or because they do not contribute to a quick victory. Conventional martial arts attacks or the Strong Slap maneuver are not used since it may take many blows to finally fell an opponent. Only the Stunning Slap,

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Hurl, Immovability, and Immobilizing maneuvers are permitted in a civilized match.

Novice sumotori who do not yet know how to employ the more advanced special maneuvers must resort to simple overbearing or grappling attacks to defeat an opponent. An overbearing attack may be used to force the opponent to the ground. The defender may add his strength to-hit bonus to his effective armor class to resist the overbearing attack, as described earlier, or he may avoid being overborne by using the Immovability maneuver.

An attacker may use a grappling hold to grab the opponent and then try to force him out of the ring. Once a grappling hold is accomplished, the attacker may use his next melee attack to move the defender to the edge of the ring and attempt to push, pull, or lift the defender out of the ring. A successful to-hit roll is required to force the defender out. The defender may use his strength bonus to hit as an effective armor class to avoid being forced out, just as if the defender were trying to resist being overborne. Of course, Immovability may be used to try to remain in the ring. The attacker may continue making to-hit rolls to try to force the defender out of the ring, until the defender is finally forced out or breaks the grappling hold.

As the sumotori advances in level, the special maneuvers are gradually introduced into matches. The Stunning Slap may be employed to stun a foe before an overbearing or grappling attack is tried. The Hurl is the most commonly used attack maneuver, since it avoids the strength bonus used by the defender to resist overbearing or grappling attacks. Immovability is used in the obvious ways. An Immobilizing lock is often used in the same manner as an ordinary grappling hold, but the attacker is +4 to hit in his attempt to force the defender out of the ring because of the effectiveness of the hold.

Now, let's take a look at an example of a sumo bout between Kurudo and Yori.

Kurudo: AC 6; MV 12"; Sumo 7; hp 64; THAC0 6 - (+2) = 14; #AT 5/2; Dmg 2d6+2; S 18/56, D 12, C 17/04; Weight 470 lbs.; Reduced distance -5'; Immovability/ Stun save 10 - (+4) = 6; AL LN.

Yori: XC 7; MV 12"; Sumo 6; hp 51; THAC0 18 - (+1) = 17; #AT 5/2; Dmg 2d6 + 1; S 17/32, D 15, C 16/93; Weight 440 lbs.; Reduced damage -4'; Immovability/ Stun save 11 - (+3) = 8; AL LG.

After the wrestlers perform the obligatory ceremonies, the psychic duel begins. Yori wins the duel with a roll of 17 to Kurudo's 8, and so Kurudo suffers the previously-mentioned penalties. Yori will need every advantage he can get against the bigger, stronger, and more experienced Kurudo.

Yori wins the initiative in the first round of the match, rolling a 4 to Kurudo's 2 (3 - 1 = 2). Yori goes for a quick victory by

Table 1
Sumotori Experience

Experience points	Experience level	10-sided dice for accumulated hit points
0-4,500	1	1
4,501-9,000	2	2
9,001-18,000	3	3
18,001-40,000	4	4
40,001-100,000	5	5
100,001-250,000	6	6
250,001-600,000	7	7
600,001+	8	8

Table 2
Sumotori Capabilities

Experience level	Armor class	Additional martial-arts attacks	Additional martial-arts damage	Weight gain
1	10			
2	10			+25 lbs.
3	9		+1	+50 lbs.
4	9	1/4	+2	+75 lbs.
5	8	1/4	+1D	+100 lbs.
6	7	1/2	+1D+1	+150 lbs.
7	6	1/2	+1D+2	+200 lbs.
8	5	1/1	+2D	+250 lbs.

Table 3
Sumai Martial-Arts Style Statistics

No. of attacks	Damage	AC	Attack	Principle weapons
211	1-6	8	Hand	None

Table 4
Special Abilities

Level	Ability gained
1	Lock 1: Choke Hold
1	Strike 1: Strong Slap ¹
2	Vital area 1: Stunning Slap ¹
3	Lock 2: Locking Block
4	Throw 3: Hurl
5	Lock 3: Incapacitator
6	Movement 3: Immovability
7	Lock 4: Immobilizing
8	Special 5: Crushing Hug ²

¹ This maneuver is slightly altered for sumo wrestlers.

² This maneuver is unique to the sumotori NPC class.

Table 5
Sumotori Weight

Sumotori's weight (lbs.)	Reduced distance moved (feet)	Stun or Immovability save bonus
250-300	-1'	0
301-350	-2'	+1
351-400	-3'	+2
401-450	-4'	+3
451-500	-5'	+4
501+	-6'	+5

trying the Hurl maneuver. He needs to roll an 11 to hit Kurudo's AC 6. Yori succeeds with a roll of 14, but Kurudo is entitled to an Immovability save to avoid being thrown to the ground. Kurudo rolls $13 - 1 = 12$ and saves easily.

Kurudo responds by trapping Yori in an Immobilizing Lock after rolling $19 - 1 = 18$ for his to-hit roll. Kurudo may spend his next attack in moving Yori to the edge of the ring and trying to force him out at +4 to Kurudo's attack roll. Yori would, of course, be entitled to attempt an Immovability save to avoid being forced out, but first he uses his melee attack to try to break free. Yori pushes his strength up to 18/00 and makes an attack roll. Yori's +3 strength bonus enables him to break the

hold with a roll of $15 + 3 - 6 = 12$ (an attempt to break an Immobilizing Lock is made at -6 on the roll).

Kurudo retaliates by performing a Hurl maneuver, but misses with a roll of $5 - 1 = 4$. Kurudo automatically loses initiative for the next round (see *Oriental Adventures*, page 104).

Yori's first attack of the second round is the Stunning Slap maneuver. Yori rolls a 16 and scores a solid head blow. Kurudo is allowed a saving throw to avoid being stunned, but fails with a roll of $6 - 1 = 5$. Had Kurudo not lost the psychic duel, he would not have suffered the -1 penalty that made him miss the save. Kurudo is stunned and helpless, and Yori pushes him out of the ring with ease. Yori earns one

Continued from page 32

takes place is 15' wide and is covered by a roof. In ancient times, this roof was held aloft by pillars which surrounded the dohyo, but in modern Japan, the roof is suspended from the-ceiling. This roof is intended to make the dohyo resemble a shrine (sumo wrestling's origins are built upon the Shinto religion). Spectators are seated in rush-matted boxes which are placed on all sides of the dohyo. These spectators usually keep teapots or bottles of sake close by, for many shobu take place during a tournament.

Most shobu are very brief, lasting less than 10 seconds in most cases, although some matches have been known to go on for as long as five minutes (these matches are usually stopped and restarted if they are not resolved within the first minute or two). Sumotori have no right of protest; the decision of the judges is final. The option remains, however, to redo a shobu if the outcome is too close to accurately determine the winner.

Certain restrictions apply in regard to victory conditions in a shobu; as in any competition, some actions are considered illegal. A few examples of legal and the illegal actions follow:

Forbidden actions: punching with a closed, fist, hitting below the belt, bending back the fingers, clapping both ears at once, pulling hair, breaking bones, gouging eyes, and choking.

Legal actions: punching with the heel of the hand, butting, grabbing the upper body, tripping, slapping, straight-arming, pushing against the jaw, and grabbing the mawashi.

Each shobu has two contestants; one referee, and up to five judges. The smaller the tournament (basho), the fewer the number of judges used. Today, there are six large (15-day) tournaments, but this number is certainly excessive for an *Oriental Adventure's* campaign world. Consequently, it is suggested that only two such basho take place each year.

The first recorded shobu took place in the year 30 B.C. At that time, women were allowed to participate. Today, however, this is no longer the case.

Sumotori are almost always over 6' tall, and the very lightest weigh more than 200 lbs. (the wrestlers frequently weigh twice that much). The sumotori achieve this size by dedicating themselves to the sport at an early age. Their diet consists of stew made of cabbage, carrots, onions, and bean curd flavored with soy sauce and sugar. Fish is added for further enrichment. This wrestler's stew is called *chanko-nabe*. Sumotori eat twice a day and supplement each meal with vast quantities of rice. Apprentice sumotori cook for the elder wrestlers.

In the end, it is not physical superiority that alone produces a champion sumotori. Ultimately, it is the psychological awareness the wrestler possesses that determines his success or failure. It is this awareness which allows the sumotori to out-think his opponent by forcing him into a moment of relaxation.

Sumotori characters

The sumotori is a subclass of bushi (see Table 1) and thus attacks and makes saving throws on the fighter's tables. Sumotori use neither armor, shields, weapons, oil, nor poison; they fight only with their hands and bodies. Only lawful male humans may become sumotori, and few of them dare commit an evil act within the dohyo during a shobu, as this till risk the loss of the match. Sumotori must have the following minimum ability scores: strength 16, dexterity 12, constitution 14, and wisdom 13. Each sumotori starts with four proficiency slots. At 1st level, one slot must be for the shobu ceremony, and one must be for cooking. (The shobu ceremony requires one slot and has a base chance of success of 13; without this proficiency, a sumotori cannot take part in any shobu.) A new slot is gained every four levels that the sumotori acquires. The number of proficiencies may seem a bit low, but as sumotori progress, they automatically develop a style of martial arts

honor point for his victory, while Kurudo loses two honor points in his loss to an inferior opponent.

The sumotori is not presented as yet another character class for the use (or misuse) of novelty-seeking players, but is intended as a highly specialized NPC that may add a bit of color to an Oriental campaign world. Sumotori suffer too many limitations to be used as a general-purpose dungeon explorer and monster slayer, but may act as an ally or hired muscle for a special mission. And encountered as a warlords bodyguard, yakuza enforcer, or Imperial court wrestler, the sumotori may provide a new challenge for Oriental adventures. Ω

that is gained without expenditure of additional proficiency slots. Sumotori avoid using magical items in the dohyo, as the use of such items is strictly forbidden in actual competition. No henchmen or hirelings may be gained by a sumotori, and no bonus is given to earned experience for high ability scores.

Sumotori gain experience from the shobu in which they take part. A sumotori who wins a shobu gains experience points in the amount of 10 times the hit points of his opponent; if he loses, the experience points merely equal the opponent's hit-point total. Player-character sumotori may gain experience in the usual way, but given their restrictions—this is certain to be difficult. Sumotori might be given permission to use magical rings or bracers that benefit armor class and saving throws, but they still cannot use weapons, armors, etc., which limits the nature of their prospective quests.

To a sumotori, wrestling is everything. He must remain totally dedicated to his pursuit if he is to become a grand champion (*yokozuna*). For this reason, it is suggested that sumo wrestlers be only NPCs. If a player fervently wishes to play a sumo wrestler, however, the DM should consider the request. In this case, the DM should impose training requirements upon the character similar to the training requirements imposed on a kensai (see *Oriental Adventures*, page 17).

Sumotori must train both physically and spiritually. Physically, the sumotori works hard to build his body. For this reason, most successful sumotori come from the high mountains or train in the mountains, for life there promotes physical health. Sumotori build their hip muscles by wading through deep snow, and they pound their arms against wooden poles (*teppo*) to harden their skin. Spiritually, the Shinto religion governs sumo wrestling. As a result, much emphasis is placed on ritual and moral standards. Generally speaking, sumotori do not have elaborate philosophical beliefs, but rather believe that the gods (*kami*) inhabit all things in nature.

Shobu ceremony

As determined by tradition, a sumotori must go through a certain ceremony before each shobu. This ceremony is Shinto based and is required of all sumotori. If this proficiency is not taken for some reason, the sumotori may not participate in any shobu. The shobu ceremony requires one slot for acquisition and has a base chance of success of 13.

The following steps must be carefully observed by a sumotori, for failure to successfully complete the ceremony may bring shame to the sumotori in question. Before entering the dohyo, the sumotori must wash his mouth out with water and throw salt into the dohyo. These actions purify the sumotori and the dohyo, respectively. He then enters the dohyo, squats, and claps his hands together soundly. This calls the attention of the gods to the sumotori. The sumotori must then extend his arms slowly toward his opponent and rotate his palms so as to show the opponent that no weapons are being carried. He then stamps the ground to drive away any evil spirits which thought to affect the outcome of the shobu. After this, the sumotori then tries to psyche out his opponent. He will sometimes glower with open belligerence while at other times he may not so much as honor his opponent with a glance. The sumotori then move about while slapping at his body, preparing for the conflict.

Special bonuses and abilities

Sumotori, like other *Oriental Adventures* characters, have many special abilities. Several of them relate to the training which they receive, while others are dependent upon their innate energy, called *ki*.

Sumotori receive a +3 bonus to their psychic-duel rolls because of the technique of mental domination that they develop as a part of their training for the shobu. Sumotori train to be strong and tough. As a result, when rolling the 12-sided die to determine their hit points, the result should never be less than twice their constitution bonus for hit points. As an example, a sumotori NPC has just been created at 1st level. The DM determined that his constitution should be 17, so the DM rolls a 12-sided die to determine the hit points of the sumotori. The result is a 4, but because two times the constitution bonus of 17 is six ($2 \times 3 = 6$), the sumotori can have no less than 6 hp and is awarded that many.

As the sumotori advances, he is taught all of the aspects of the sumo technique of martial arts. He also receives bonuses to his armor class and initiative. Table 2 shows the statistics on this new technique. Likewise, Table 3 lists the sumotori's special abilities by level.

Sumotori also gain the benefit of two special *ki* powers. Beginning at 1st level, the sumotori is less affected by blunt weaponry. At this level, a successful save vs. petrification results in only one-half

damage being sustained. At 9th level, this ability increases in benefit. A successful save means that no damage is taken, and only one-half damage is sustained without the save. The ability affects only the base damage of the weapon; magical and strength bonuses are not affected. For example, a 10th-level sumotori is hit by a person wielding a *tetsubo* +2. This *tetsubo* normally causes 1d8 + 2 hp damage. But the sumotori successfully makes his save vs. petrification; this save only affects the 1d8 hp base damage, not the magical bonus, so the sumotori still sustains 2 hp damage.

The other *ki* ability is gained at 2nd level and may be used only once per day. It allows the sumotori to increase his strength through force of will. The bonus may be determined by using the following formula: Add the number of rounds that the bonus is in effect to the number of points by which the sumotori's strength increases; this value must equal the level of the sumotori. For strengths that will exceed 18, the strength categories of 18/01-18/50, 18/51-18/75, 18/76-18/90, 18/91-18/99, and 18/00 each count as one point of strength. It is possible to gain a 19 strength at best, but this counts as a two-level increase beyond an 18/00 strength; if only one level beyond 18/00 is taken, 18/00 is the strength gained. For example, a 5th-level sumotori with a strength of 18/54 has just begun a shobu and wishes to increase his strength to better his chance at victory. He wants the increase for only one round, so he may add up to four levels of strength points. Four levels is but one level past 18/00, so he receives an 18/00 strength. Had he been 6th level, he could have received a 19 strength for that one round.

Honor is as important to the sumotori as it is to any other *Oriental Adventures* character. It is particularly important to the sumotori, because his success in his profession is greatly determined by his mode of conduct. Table 4 gives the sumotori's honor points and awards.

Class divisions

There are three divisions of sumotori considered for purposes of the character class. These three—*ozeki*, *maku-uchi*, and *yokozuna*—all have certain requirements that must be met if they are to be reached. A sumotori becomes an *ozeki* after winning a *basho* of any size, even if it is only a local one with four participants. The sumotori becomes a *maku-uchi* once he has consistently proven himself to be a proficient wrestler (victories in 10 or more smaller *basho* is a good figure for this). Once this division is reached, the sumotori is allowed to tie up his hair in the familiar top-knot style. His hair is then not cut until he is ready to retire (when retirement does finally take place, usually before age 30, a ceremony called *danpatsu-shiki* takes place, and a lock of the sumotori's hair is cut off). Finally, a sumotori may reach the

yokozuna division. This is a spot very few attain, for one must win a grand championship in order to gain it. (It has already been mentioned that perhaps only two *basho* of such size take place each year.) Winning against such quality competition is truly worthy of note. There is an unwritten code which all *yokozuna* must follow, however: Each is expected to voluntarily retire after losing eight consecutive shobu.

The shobu

The existence of the shobu has been taken for granted so far in this article. What follows are guidelines for recreating the shobu in AD&D game terms. The shobu begins by having each of the two opponents make a shobu ceremony proficiency roll. Failure here means a possible loss of honor, but it also means the sumotori in question does not receive his +3 bonus to psychic dueling.

Next is the psychic duel, the stage during the shobu when each sumotori tries to intimidate his opponent. The result of the duel gives a bonus to the victor in the actual shobu.

A sumotori's skill for purposes of a shobu is determined by the sumo martial-arts forms he knows, his strength, and the result of the psychic duel. Appropriate numbers of these results are totaled for each sumotori to create a Sumo Number; use the following figures:

Item	Bonus
Iron Fist	+2
Locking Block	+2
Immobility	+3
Hurl	+2
Great Throw	+4
Ironskin	+1
Strength	+ 1 per four points of strength, counting each level of strength above 18 as one point
Psychic duel	+2 to the victor

The Sumo Number is then gauged for each sumotori against a 1d20 roll, which signals the start of the actual wrestling. Each sumotori must roll less than or equal to his Sumo Number to avoid losing the shobu; if both roll over their respective numbers, they fail to make effective contact for 1d10 seconds, and the shobu continues. To win the shobu, a sumotori either must pass his Sumo Number check while his opponent fails his, or—if both sumotori make their checks—must roll a number higher than that rolled by his opponent. The length of time taken by each 1d20 roll is determined by multiplying the difference of the rolls by two, which gives the number of seconds that the shobu lasts. It is possible that both sumotori will pass their Sumo Number checks, but that they will have a tie roll; in this case, the wrestler with the higher Sumo Number wins (the shobu in this case lasts for $20 + 1d20$ seconds). If the sumo

tori fighting have both a tie roll and the same Sumo Number, the match lasts for 50 seconds plus whatever time is determined in further rolls, which continue until one minute has passed or until there is no tie. If the length of shobu exceeds one minute, it is restarted and any rolls that had determined a winner are ignored. New proficiency and psychic duel rolls must be made in this case.

For example, Shiro and Kanka are two sumotori who are facing one another. Shiro is 3rd level and has a strength of 15; Kanka is 6th level and has a strength of 18/30. Both are sure that the shobu will not last for more than one minute, so they each expend their daily ki in order to increase their strengths. Their Sumo Number totals are as follows:

Shiro: 2 (Iron Fist) +2 (Locking Block) +4 (strength of 15, increased to 17 through ki) = 8

Kanka: 2 (Iron Fist) +2 (Locking Block) +3 (Immovability) +2 (Hurl) +6 (strength of 18/30, increased to 19 through ki) = 14.

Each sumotori rolls his shobu proficiency. Only Shiro is successful; Kanka obviously forgot to wash his mouth out with water. This means that Kanka does not receive his +3 bonus to his psychic duel roll.

Next is the psychic duel. Shiro makes motions toward his mouth, to remind Kanka of his blunder, while Kanka merely tries to impress upon Shiro that Shiro is the less experienced of the pair. Kanka, however, loses the psychic duel, so Shiro gains an extra +2 to his skill number, making it 10.

Suddenly, it is time to wrestle. The two gargantuans spring at each other, and the players roll their respective 1d20s. Both sumotori roll 19s. Because both rolled over their Sumo Numbers, the match lasts (a 1d20 is rolled) 11 seconds, and another set of rolls is made. This time, Kanka rolls a 13 and Shiro rolls a 1. The difference between these two numbers is 12, which means that an additional 24 seconds pass. Kanka wins the match. Had he and Shiro had identical Sumo Numbers, and had they tied on the second roll, the shobu would have gone over 60 seconds ($11 + 50 = 61$ seconds minimum), and the referee would have stepped in to restart the match. New rolls for shobu proficiency and psychic dueling would then be made. If Kanka fails his proficiency roll again, he loses one point of honor. Also, neither sumotori gains as great a bonus for strength now because each has expended his ki reserves. It is important to note that in large basho, a sumotori may fight more than one shobu each day, so ki cannot be used to increase strength each time! Ω

Table 1
Sumotori Experience

Experience points	Experience level	12-sided dice for accumulated hit points
0-3,000	1	1
3,001-6,000	2	2
6,001-12,000	3	3
12,001-20,000	4	4
20,001-40,000	5	5
40,001-80,000	6	6
80,001-160,000	7	7
160,001-320,000	8	8
320,001-500,000	9	9
500,001-800,000	10	9 + special *
800,001-1,100,000	11	9 + special *
1,100,001-1,400,000	12	9 + special *

+300,000 per level after the 12th.

* Starting at 10th level, the sumotori gains twice his constitution bonus in extra hit points for every level.

Table 2
Sumo Martial-Arts Style Statistics

Technique	Principal method	AC modifier	#AT modifier	Body modifier	Body
Sumo	Hard/soft	Throw	3	2	5

Table 3

Level	Ability gained
1	Strike 1: Iron Fist
2	+1 armor class
3	Lock 2: Locking Block
4	Movement 3: Immovability
5	+1 initiative
6	Throw 3: Hurl
7	+1 armor class
8	Throw 4: Great Throw
9	+1 armor class
10	Mental 5: Ironskin

Honor Awards

Sumotori base honor	5
Winning a shobu against an opponent of higher/same/lower level	+2/+ 1/0
Losing a shobu against an opponent of higher/same/lower level	-1 / -2 / -3
Inability to properly perform the shobu ceremony twice in a row	- 1
Rude or evil behavior toward an opponent	
Reaching ozeki division	+3
Reaching maku-uchi division	+5
Reaching yokozuna division	
Each grand championship won (after first)	+6
Retirement ceremony	+2,
Using magic as an aid in a shobu	division gained - 3

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The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

Part 5: As they fed on a nation, so were they cursed

by Bruce A. Heard

This series chronicles the adventures of an Alphatian explorer and his crew as they journey across the D&D® Known World in their skyship. The information herein may be used to expand D&D campaigns using the Gazetteer series.

From the Journals of
PRINCE HALDEMAR OF HAAKEN
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest Empire
Captain of the Ever-Victorious
PRINCESS ARK
Imperial Explorer, etc., etc.

Cyprimir 10, 1965: We have now reached the region called the Vulture Peninsula. It is a complete desert, where occasional sand dunes alternate with desolate rocky wasteland. According to the stars, we have sailed well south of the Meridional Tropics, and the winds regularly blow from the west. Despite the presence of the sea, very little vegetation grows here at all. Temperatures are similar to that of southern Alphatia in summertime. The very poor quality of the soil and extremely dry winds coming from the land contribute to this infertile wilderness.

Cyprimir 16, 1965: A large plateau can be seen on the peninsula, no more than a few miles from the coast, forming sandstone cliffs falling into the sea. The plateau reaches 600' in average height. So far, no sign of civilization has been encountered in this region. This place deserves its name, for the whole peninsula has the shape of a vulture's head, and vultures slowly circle underneath the ship. The refuse dumped overboard has attracted these clumsy birds. A lucky bird sometimes succeeds in catching some falling garbage, but most of them manage only to get splattered with smelly waste. If nothing else, the vultures offer the crew some amusement, making easy targets for the antiquated crossbows on board. At dawn I shall order a southern course to cross the peninsula's widest section.

Cyprimir 18, 1965: The vultures are getting bolder. They seem to have figured out our dining hours and know when to expect waste to come falling down. I caught one indolently perched on the railing next to my door. Another ruffled its filthy feathers while observing the ship boy scrubbing the deck—hungrily observing, I imagined. That's when a blood-curdling shriek from starboard literally froze everybody in place. It was Lady Abovombe.

The scene that greeted our hasty arrival was certainly a striking one. Lady Abovombe had been taking her daybreak stroll when one of the vultures perched in the riggings managed to soil her favorite décolleté dress. Furious, the ambassadress seized a boat hook and swung it at the bird, impaling the "criminal"—but further splattering her with its blood. Then she sought out the watch on duty, screaming at the top her lungs as to why such a slovenly creature could be permitted to





remain on board, and she gave the watch a solid punch in the mouth. It is the first time I've noticed that Lady Abovombe has a hot temper, but she is extraordinarily pretty when her cheeks turn rosy.

Cyprimir 19, 1965: In the morning, the lookout called out a discovery on the ground below. At first we saw nothing, but after a few minutes we made out what must have been a road, centuries old—now merely a narrow band of a color different from the soil. Then I saw several other ancient roads. They converged to the east, and we followed them—and there it was. A ruined city! From the ground it would have been nearly impossible to see, but we were high enough to distinguish its shape. Streets, walls, buildings—we could see the outlines of them all, but barely even the walls remained now. The city must have been raised in the depths of times past. It had been built on a group of several small hills, with one larger hill, tapered on top, in the center. I decided to investigate this myself, and I ordered Xerdon and a squad of boltmen with me.

Cyprimir 20, 1965: There was very little to see on the surface—mostly dust and rocks. We climbed the peaked central hill and discovered the ruins of an old temple. The men started digging and sifting through rubble, in search of archaeological clues. We found plenty. There was indeed an advanced civilization here. It appears that at the time of its' splendor, the city was surrounded by fertile plains, lush forests, and several rivers and lakes.

Then, following the death of a great king, the king's two sons fought for the throne, dividing the nation in a bloody civil war. No other clues were unveiled as to the outcome of the struggle. It was getting late, and I ordered the team back to the ship for the night. We'll remain in this area and explore a bit more tomorrow at our leisure.

Cyprimir 21, 1965: Soon after sunset last night, a sentry interrupted my rest with news of movement down below. I had him order total silence aboard the ship while I took out my *crystal ball* for a little investigative work.

A strange creature was slowly walking by, hunched under the weight of a bag. It looked like an old man with the head of a vulture. Another hint at vultures! This could no longer be a coincidence. I decided to let the creature go its way, so I could quietly observe it.

The creature never showed any awareness of the ship above the temple. It marched away and kept going for hours along one of the nearly invisible roads to the east. Before sunrise, it crawled into a niche under a large rock and closed the entrance with a dusty blanket. It then went to sleep—and shortly thereafter, so did I, canceling our planned foray into the ruins.

Since this creature was the only apparent inhabitant we have met in this desert so far, I've decided to follow its slow jour-

ney from a safe distance, observing it through the magical sphere again this evening. More later.

Cyprimir 24, 1965: It has been days now since I first saw the vulture-man. I discovered a fitting description of it in the ship's library. It is a nagpa, a creature found in other parts of the world and said to dabble in necromancy (how fitting). As usual, our specimen crawled out of its shelter after sundown and kept moving to the east.

Its journey's end was at hand, however. Much later in the night, it reached the edge of a depression in the desert. Hundreds of other nagpas were walking down the slopes to the bottom, toward a large volcanic-like mound. They encircled it, then one after the other they climbed to the top of the mound to drop some jewelry into the dark opening thereon. Meanwhile, the other nagpas chanted a sad but powerful psalmody. The wind picked up, and the nagpas knelt down facing the mound, waiting.

Many long minutes, perhaps an hour, passed. Then faint lights appeared above the nagpas—at first only a few flickering auras, then hundreds and soon thousands of them, filling the sky above the depression. The scene was frightening. These illuminated shapes were undoubtedly the ghostly images of the people who once populated this region. These ghosts slowly reenacted scenes of battle and carnage involving a level of violence that I have never before witnessed.

Then a huge, ugly shadow rose from the opening of the mound when the horrifying war scenes reached their paroxysm. This shadow was, for me, the embodiment of fear and destruction. Even from this ship, stationed miles from the site, I could sense the evil of that grotesque being. Inexplicably, the apparition and the ghosts suddenly faded in the dark. The nagpas began searching the site, picking up round, black cocoons from the sand that had not been there before. Within the hour, most had left, headed in various directions. Our little nagpa is coming back toward the ship. It is time to know the truth.

Cyprimir 26, 1965: I decided to meet our specimen personally late last night, so I prepared myself and waited along the road for it. It was not surprised when it saw me. "You saw," it said somberly (its words translated by my spells). It obviously knew I had been observing it all along.

"Our" nagpa goes by the name of Abatu of Varelyya. It told me of its tormented existence. There was indeed a vast nation here once, and a brutal war. One of the two princes conjured a powerful monster from the Sphere of Entropy to destroy his rival. He clearly was unable to control the Immortal avatar, and when it had accomplished its crime, it turned on its summoner and obliterated his entire land. He and all his people would be cursed to live,

die, and forever return as nagpas—feeders on carrion as they had once fed on each other in war.

Every year for centuries, the accursed people of Varelyya return to the site of the ancient conjuration and sacrifice jewels, precious metals, magical items, books, knowledge, food, anything that may have any value to them, seeking atonement and an end to their wretchedness. Death itself will not break the curse. When death befalls, the souls of the Varelyans return to the mound. Every year at the same time, the ghosts fight their wars all over again, then materialize as embryos inside the black cocoons. Over time—I don't know how long—they grow to adult size and breach the cocoons.

Many nagpas wander the far reaches of the world, but they always return to Varelyya in soul or in body. Abatu pulled one of those black spheres from his robes and said, "You see, wizard, this is my father. He was the King of Varelyya, and I was one of his sons. Such is the—sentence for my crime. Perhaps one day the Immortals will forgive us, but until then we must go on. Feel free to plunder the mound, wizard, but beware of the risks."

I bade him farewell. As the ship continued its course to the south, I burned the map of the site and all notes on its whereabouts, then scattered them in the nocturnal wind.

To be continued. . . .

If you have already designed the areas covered by the flight of the *Princess Ark*, simply ignore the information given here (the skyship simply went by, assuming that these areas were already well known to the Alphatians). If you have any comments regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the Gazetteers, please send your inquiries to: Bruce Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they will certainly have our attention. Your input into the development of the D&D Known World is welcome.

Abatu of Varelyya, Nagpa

Armor Class	3
Hit Dice	9 **
Hit Points	64
Move	120'(40')
Attacks	1 bite or spell
Damage	1d8 or special
No. Appearing	1 (1)
S a v e A s	MU9
Morale	9
Treasure Type	I
Alignment	Chaotic
XP Value	2,300

Abatu was a human being back in 565 A.C. (1565 A.Y.) and was the Crown Prince of Varelyya. The king wasn't dead when Abatu claimed the throne;

Abatu had merely had the old man abducted and declared dead. Abatu had a twin brother, Lothir, who was Abatu's accomplice in the king's abduction but who challenged Abatu's right to the crown. Their morbid rivalry caused the total destruction of Varelyya and the curse that turned all Varelyans into nagpas (see AC9 *Creature Catalogue*, page 73). Since then, Abatu has already died and been reincarnated three times.

Abatu's goal is to break the four-century-old curse that afflicts him and his people. Since the catastrophe, Abatu has discovered that he must find his brother and come to terms with him in order to break the curse. He knows—but ignores—where Lothir is. Abatu has visited many places in the world, including Alphatia, Thyatis, and the far reaches of Sind. He commonly travels with the Flying City of Serraine (see PC2 *Top Ballista*), a fabulous gnomish creation that roams the world. Abatu has a *ring of teleportation*, the only item of value he has never dropped into the mound. He uses it to get aboard the Flying City.

Abatu has avoided dealing with the fact that his brother is kept prisoner deep beneath the volcanic-like mound, where he nourishes an eternal hate toward Abatu. The keeper is a night-

walker (HD 25, hp 171, D&D *Master DM's Book*, pages 36-37) that can only be dismissed back to the Sphere of Entropy by a voluntary and simultaneous wish (not as a spell) on the part of the twins. If an outside party ever managed to defeat the nightwalker, it would reform within a day and return from the Sphere of Entropy. If Lothir (himself a nagpa, identical to his brother in statistics) was taken away from the mound, the nightwalker would stalk him forever, seeking to bring him back. Once the nightwalker is properly dismissed, the twins disintegrate and the curse is broken; the Varelyan nagpas continue their normal lives as nagpas, but their deaths afterward are final and forever. The land remains a desert. The Immortal who caused the Varelyan calamity has long forgotten about the whole affair and is neither reachable nor interested.

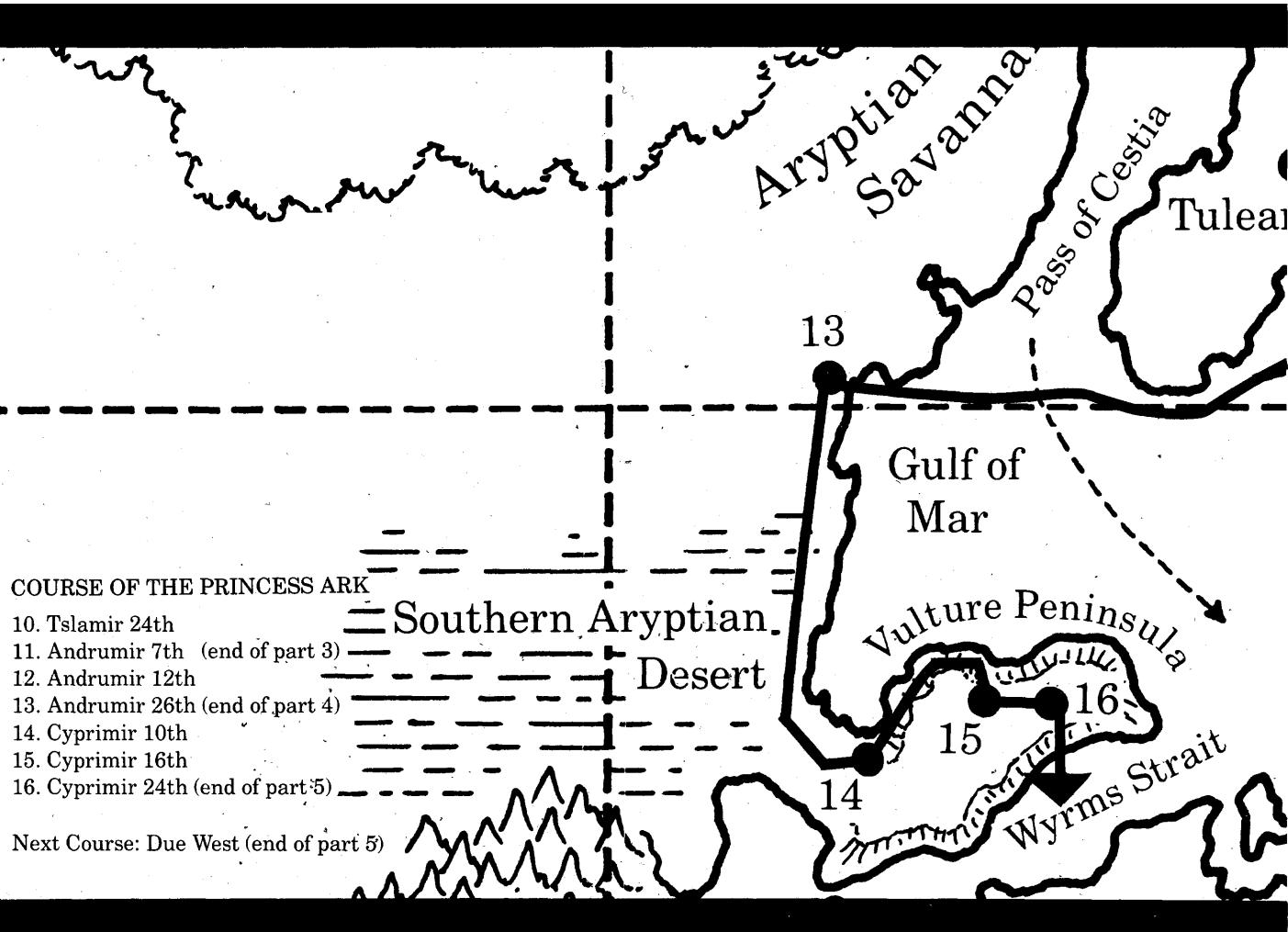
Abatu keeps his true identity a secret, fearing that his people might interfere with his goals or torture him. Death is no concern, since he would reincarnate within a year—but he fears the loss of his magical ring. Abatu loathes the thought of entering the mound in search of his brother, and he generally would prefer staying out of Varelyya. Abatu is a conniving, treacherous being who stops at nothing to reach his goals.

Abatu senses when a kin dies, and he returns to Varelyya for the cocoon to place it in a local cavern or dungeon later on.

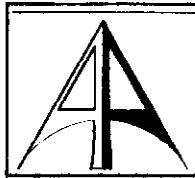
Nagpas can do each of the following, three times a day: *create flames*, *paralysis*, *corruption*, *darkness*, and *phantasmal force*. *Create flames* causes flammable objects within 60' to burst into flames for 1-3 rounds, inflicting 2-12 hp damage (a Saving Throw vs. Spells grants half damage). *Paralysis* causes all Lawful characters within 10' to make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or be paralyzed for 1-4 rounds. *Corruption* causes nonliving objects within 60' to decay into uselessness (magical items make Saving Throws vs. Spells at the level of the character using them). In combat, a nagpa will try to avoid melee and use its spells instead.

Nagpas prefer staying in deserted ruins or wastes, avoiding humans if possible. They speak their own tongue, Varelyan, and often another language or two (Glantrian, Sindish, etc.) depending on where they live. A reincarnated nagpa takes 5-8 months to breach a cocoon, then emerges as an adult with all its memories of its previous lives intact.

Ω



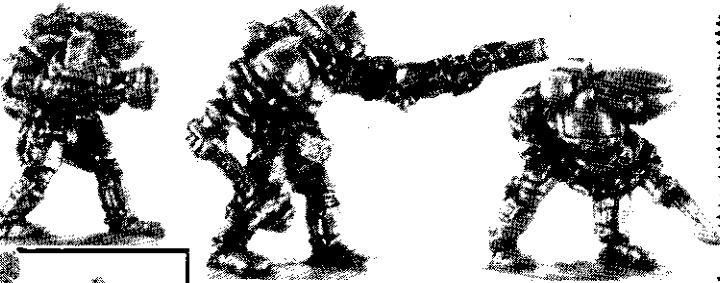
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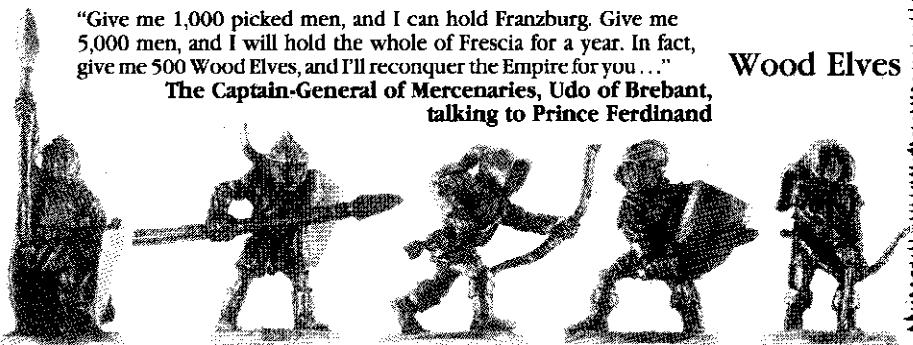
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The Captain-General of Mercenaries, Udo of Brebant,
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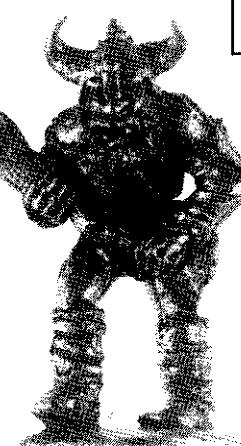
Wood Elves



Fnorr the Big 'Un

I suppose it might be an example of their collective, grim humour, but the Dwarfs of the Icelands worship a god whose sheer size alone marks him out more for the deity of Titans than Dwarfs. But Fnorr is a living reminder to the Dwarvish race that they can rise to any heights...

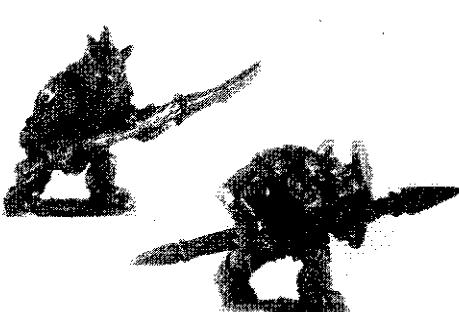
The Correspondence of the Republic's Ambassador
to the Dwarvish Ice Kingdom



Orc Spearmen

The battle was turned by the crazed charge of the Orc spearmen, who broke upon the Duke's left wing with berserk fury, carrying his light horse and a few field pieces away with them like small sticks before the tide...

Eusel; the Battle of Meerbricht



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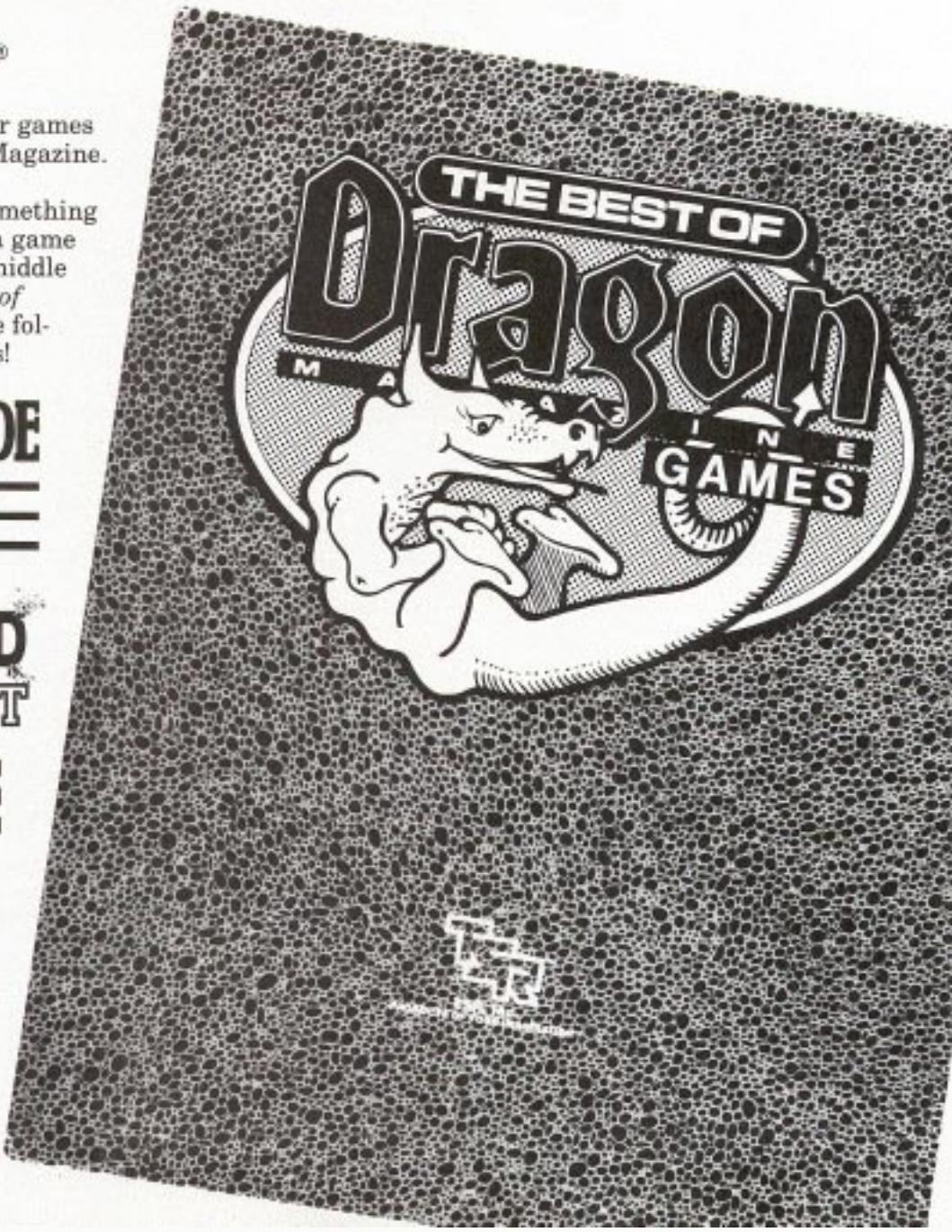
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The Ecology of The Wemic

The best of both halves: the lion-men

by J. F. Keeping

Report from the High Scholar Thothus of the Temple of Thoth, to the King of Khemara, Ramnius:

It was six passings of the second moon ago that you, Sire, sent me on a mission to study the lion-folk who have long inhabited the savannahs on our southwestern border, to determine if they might make suitable allies in our ongoing conflict with the Kyrian barbarians. I am now ready to make my report.

Known variously as lion-men, lion-centaurs, and jungle centaurs (a misnomer, for they inhabit only grasslands), the lion-folk are called by scholars wemics, a rendition of their name for themselves. As we all know, wemics have the appearance of lions with human torsos, arms, and heads where the lions' heads should be, like to lions as centaurs are to horses.¹ Their lion parts are identical to those of true lions, covered in soft coat of golden-brown fur, with tails ending in tufts of dark-brown hair. The human portions are particularly muscular and hairy, and head hair is worn long in both sexes. Such hair is softer in texture than a male lion's mane. Males have thick, dark-brown manes that run down their backs; females have pale golden hair. Their faces are basically human, but with forward-thrust jaws, pointed ears (placed high on the head) that can move like those of a cat, and sharp feline teeth. Their eyes are feline as well, with pupils that contract to a slit in the day and open to great orbs at night, affording them excellent night vision.²

Their grooming is something over which the lion-folk are very careful. The males, in particular, seem almost foppish by our standards, though I have learned firsthand the dangers in showing amusement at this. They spend hours brushing and cleaning their fur (with crude brushes, not their tongues), and the males are almost obsessive in caring for their manes. Manes are combed, braided, dyed, and even decorated with jewelry on special occasions. The wives of married wemics help in mane-dressing, with the result that the

patriarch—the leader of a band of wemics, having several wives—has the best-kept mane in the group. To insult one's mane is considered cause for a duel among the lion-folk.

The lion-folk roam temperate and tropical grasslands in hunter-gatherer bands usually called prides. Each pride consists of about a dozen males, one or two dozen females, and as many as a dozen young, age five years or less.³ A number of loosely related prides in an area make a tribe (see below). Wemics are carnivores, but they cook meat and know how to preserve it with salt and various spices and herbs (they have acquired a taste for hot spices, in particular). They hunt often, for their active lives require them to eat twice as much as other humanoids of their size and weight.

Hunting reveals the personalities of the lion-folk. They constantly seek intense emotion and excitement, as found in love and battle. They express their emotions in roars and yowls of anger, sadness, or happiness. They fear nothing except boredom, and respect courage, loyalty, and honor above all else. They are always truthful, never hide their feelings, and always keep a vow until death. This remarkable honesty may be in part explained by their tails. Like domestic cats, wemics show their emotional states with their tails: held high for pride, hung low for fear, slashing for anger, tapping for annoyance, etc. Thus they see no use hiding their feelings when their tails betray them.

Tasks among the lion-folk are strictly segregated between the sexes. Males hunt while females guard the cubs; males make weapons and other metallic items while females make the tents and blankets; and so forth. Female wemics are more conservative and controlled than their male counterparts, more prone to contemplation than rash action. But they are no less fierce when their young are threatened, and they, too, believe in conspicuous displays of emotion. Although prides are led

by males, wives are a leader's most valued advisors (polygamy is practiced among the lion-folk but is permitted only to their leaders).

Courtship among the lion-folk is slightly different from our own. Although the male pursues the female, it is the female who makes the choice of her mate. The lion-men are forever grooming, strutting, and dueling to prove themselves the best consort. This is the reason why only wemic leaders have more than one wife: The lion-women are very practical and always choose the strongest and wisest mate, and who would be stronger or wiser than the pride's patriarch?

Like humans, wemics mate at any time of the year. The gestation period is six months. Twins and triplets are not common but are not as rare as with humanity. The cub is born with its eyes open, like a human baby, and grows at a remarkable rate. They are weaned at six months, then taught the skills of the pride by their third year. A father will teach his son, and a mother her daughter. Parents love their children immensely. By the time he reaches maturity, at age six or seven, a lion-man is 7' long with a 3' tail, standing at least 6' tall and weighing almost 600 lbs. Females are slightly smaller, being 6' long and 450 lbs., on the average. A wemic's life expectancy is 40-50 years spent in an intense, energetic lifestyle. Few males reach this age, however, for when a lion-man feels his strength and speed weakened by age, he grows increasingly reckless in combat, until he is killed. The females are more responsible but do not begrudge their husbands this final honor. Old males can be as warlike and foolhardy as young males, both groups eager to prove themselves.

The renown that the lion-folk enjoy as

hunters is deserved. They are faultless trackers, using both their excellent noses and their knowledge of animal lore.⁴ They are as silent as any great cat and are able to conceal themselves from sight in their native grasslands. They have learned to use herbs to disguise their scent. They can run at up to four times their normal speed for bursts of two minutes or less, and are able to leap 10' up or 30' forward while standing, or 50' forward with a running start. They are clever hunters—hiding by a waterhole to leap upon approaching prey, or having one of their number circle around a herd to startle it into running upon the waiting spears of the other lion-men. Against larger opponents, they use ropes to entangle the legs, then leap upon the prey, hanging on with their claws and striking at the head with their spears. Even giant animals like the elephant will fall to the skill of these hunters. Although the pride I stayed with, the Long Claws, hunted zebras and antelopes (the wemics' major prey) and an occasional elephant, the patriarch, Wind-Chaser, spoke of tribes that hunted the great hornless rhino—the baluchitherium—and I had no reason to disbelieve him.⁵

Wemics consider hunting and battle to be almost the same thing. Against less intelligent foes, they use the same tactics as they use when hunting. Their other favorite tactics include pretending to

charge a battle line, then leaping over the line to land atop the unprepared troops behind it. Or they may pretend to retreat, letting the attackers run onto the spears of other wemics hidden in the brush. Often they will leap over fleeing foes to attack them by surprise from the front and cut off their escape. Their roaring is enough to unnerve most soldiers and rout all but the best-trained animals.⁶ (I was unable to question them further on their battle tactics, for obvious reasons.) But even without strategy, they are formidable in combat. Their human parts can withstand wounds that would kill most men instantly. They have the intelligence of men with the speed, strength, and agility of the great cats. If they could be persuaded to join our armies, we would have an unbeatable force.⁷

The lion-folk have a great respect for skill and strength in combat, but despite this, their feelings toward other races depend mainly upon whether or not those species are a threat to them. The stories of their hunting and eating humans are completely untrue; they do not eat sentient creatures and can find far easier prey than humans. The Lion Wars of 626-642 were caused by our settling of the southern plains, which they interpreted as a threat to their territory. Note that there have been very few incidents between our races since. They have little interest in

humans as a rule; indeed, they cannot usually tell humans and demi-humans apart, calling us all “the half-people.” They respect the tabaxi and bear them no enmity, because the cat-men inhabit jungles and are therefore no threat to them. Warlike humanoids, particularly the tasloi, are hunted for sport; the lion-men consider them cowardly and very delicate (they die from wounds that would only annoy a wemic). Lions, oddly enough, are the lion-men's greatest enemies. Lions inhabit the same land and hunt the same animals, so they are the lion-folks' competitors. For this reason, wemics attempt to drive off or kill any lions found in their territories.

As may be said of our own species, the lion-folks' greatest enemies are themselves. Although prides within the same tribe do not fight among themselves, wemics of different tribes fight over land and prey constantly. This is considered quite normal by all, and the males enjoy the battle greatly. However, there is rarely lasting resentment between the tribes, and the females and young of a conquered tribe become full members of the conquering tribe without prejudice. Conquered males may join their conquerors' tribes, but must pass through torturous rituals and complete quests first. Otherwise, they are banished or slain.

As may be expected, the patriarch of a pride of wemics is the strongest male,



selected by ritual unarmed duels. However, when a number of related prides (usually from 3-30) band together to form a tribe, the leader of one pride is elected by the others to be the tribal leader, or chief. He retains the position of patriarch of his own pride as well. Rarely, a number of tribes (as few as two or as many as eight) will band together under a great hero who becomes their king, forming a clan or nation. The tribes, naturally warlike, are held together by the king's great charisma and reputation, and usually return to their former fragmented state after his death, unless the king's son is his equal in heroism and charisma.⁸ The wemicks' greatest accomplishments and proudest history occurred under the banner of their few kings; surely Your Highness knows of the time that, under Twoclaw, the lion-folk conquered our unprepared ancestors in the years 489-555 and forced them to build their only city, which now lies ruined in the desert but is said to still contain the treasures taken from their human slaves.

Communication with the lion-men is hampered most by their peculiar language. Indeed, I was unable to talk with them at all without the aid of my spell of *tongues*. Their speech is composed of growls and screeches, impossible for us to understand, let alone imitate, though they are able to master the Common tongue

with little difficulty. The males have deep, growling voices, while those of the females are yowling and purring. Every human child knows of the lion-man's terrifying roar and hearty laugh, but few seem to know of their women's skill at singing. These songs are composed not of words, for a skilled lion-woman can make her voice sound like bells, a flute, a lyre, or all three at once. All lion-women are taught to sing at an early age. They create their own songs as well as learn the hundreds of songs the wemicks have for everything from hunting to raising children to marriage. These songs are a very important part of religious festivals; consequently, all wemic witch doctors are female.

This brings us to the subject of religion. Wemicks revere the Cat Lord, and several of their heroes (usually their ancient kings) have achieved semidivine status. They often swear by these—e.g., "By Swift-Tail's mane!", or ("By the claws of Redlegs!" However, they are not very reverent, and aside from annual festivals, they offer little homage to their god. Consequently, witch doctors often find themselves as doctors and diviners more often than priests. Their greatest witch doctors (by my estimate) have acquired powers not much less than those of His Reverence, Thurgood II, our High Priest, and they share a small degree of my own talents as a sorcerer.

As to their origins, the lion-folk that I

knew claim to be the descendants of a band of mighty human warriors who worshipped the Cat Lord. In reward for their valor, these warriors were given speed and strength equal to their courage, becoming half-man, half-lion. The lion-folk recognize their connection to both men and lions, but consider themselves a separate species, better than both. As to the truth of this—who can say?

Wemicks lack a written language but are skilled artists, and they record their thoughts and deeds through paintings and carvings. Weapons are carved into the shape of slain enemies; shields are painted with scenes of great battles, and tents with family history. Each pride has several rolls of painted hide detailing its history and beliefs. These are carefully guarded. When a pride is conquered, these rolls are burned, symbolizing the death of the pride as an entity.

Wemicks care little for magic. They are more interested in the skills of the warrior. Rarely, a patriarch may possess a magical weapon or shield, recognizing its useful qualities, but that is all. The lion-folk do appreciate the beauty of gems and jewelry, and they may keep coins they find as trade goods for humans. (Your Highness may wish to know that the wemicks with whom I stayed claimed that they traded with some of our outlying villages even when we were at war with them.) Treasure found or plundered is considered the property of the finder.

The main vice of the lion-folk is their overindulgence in alcohols. *Mal*, a fermented melon, and *grum*, fermented coconut juice, are their favorites, but they also enjoy human liquors. At victory celebrations, the whole pride-males, females, and children—may drink themselves into a stupor. At these times they can be dangerous, attacking playfully and killing without meaning to do so. They have little foresight or wisdom in this regard, to my sorrow.

In conclusion, I can positively state that the lion-folk would make excellent allies. However, enlisting them as troops will be difficult. They are reluctant to leave their lands or join in a battle which does not concern them, despite their love of combat. Their respect must be earned, not bought, and there are very few humans who live up to their standards of military prowess. Wages would also be a problem. They could be paid in gems, jewelry, and other items of beauty, but the price would probably be too high to be practical. Great gifts of art and treasure might persuade them into signing a mutual defense treaty, but that is something for diplomats and not scholars. I suggest we keep relations with them peaceful and pursue trade with them, except in the matter of alcohol. And we should be neither too weak nor too strong in their presence, to strike the proper balance of respect and threat. My task is done.

Continued on page 54



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5. Best Miniatures Rules, 1989

- BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures rules (TSR, Inc.)
- Napoleon's Battles (The Avalon Hill Game Company)

- Soldier's Companion, for Space: 1889 (Game Designers' Workshop)
- Tactica (Arty Conliffe)
- Warhammer 40,000 Compendium (Games Workshop)

6. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1989

- AD&D 2nd Edition game (TSR, Inc.)
- Champions, hardback (Iron Crown Enterprises)
- Ghostbusters II (West End Games)
- Shadowrun (FASA Corp.)
- Space: 1889 (Game Designers' Workshop)

7. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1989

- Alice Through the Mirrorshades, for Paranoia (West End Games)
- Curse of the Azure Bonds, for the AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting (TSR, Inc.)
- Empire of the Witch-King, for Middle-earth Role Playing (Iron Crown Enterprises)
- The Great Old Ones, for Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium)
- The Ice Man Returneth, for Paranoia (West End Games)
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11. Best Modern-Day Board Game, 1989

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14. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1989

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- Illuminati (Flying Buffalo)
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15. Best New Play-By-Mail Game, 1989

- Beyond the Stellar Empire—The New System (Adventures By Mail)
- Orion Nebula (Orpheus Publishing Corp.)
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16. Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Computer Game, 1989

- Curse of the Azure Bonds (Strategic Simulations)
- Dragon Wars (Interplay Productions)
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- Sword of the Samurai (MicroProse Software)
- War of the Lance (Strategic Simulations)

17. Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1989

- Battles of Napoleon (Strategic Simulations)
- F-15 Strike Eagle II (MicroProse Software)
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18. Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989

- Challenge (Game Designers' Workshop)
- Computer Gaming World (Golden Empire Publications)
- DUNGEON® Adventures (TSR, Inc.)
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- Strategy & Tactics (3W)
- White Wolf (White Wolf Publishing)

19. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989

- The Canadian Wargamers Journal (The Canadian Wargamers Group)
- ETO (Bill Stone)
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Footnotes

1. A wemic's internal organs are divided up between his human and lion halves; he has only one of each sort of organ. The brain is located in the human head, and the lungs are in the human chest. Every thing else, including the heart, digestive system, kidneys, etc., is located in the lion body, approximately where they would be found in an actual lion.

2. The night vision of wemics is sufficient for them to see on moonlit nights as well as a human could in broad daylight, and on a cloudy night as well as we could in bright moonlight.

3. Female wemics have five hit dice. Cubs are born with one hit die and gain one per year until they reach the maximum for their gender (male cubs gain an extra hit point each year, going from 4 +4 HD to 5 +8 HD in their fifth year).

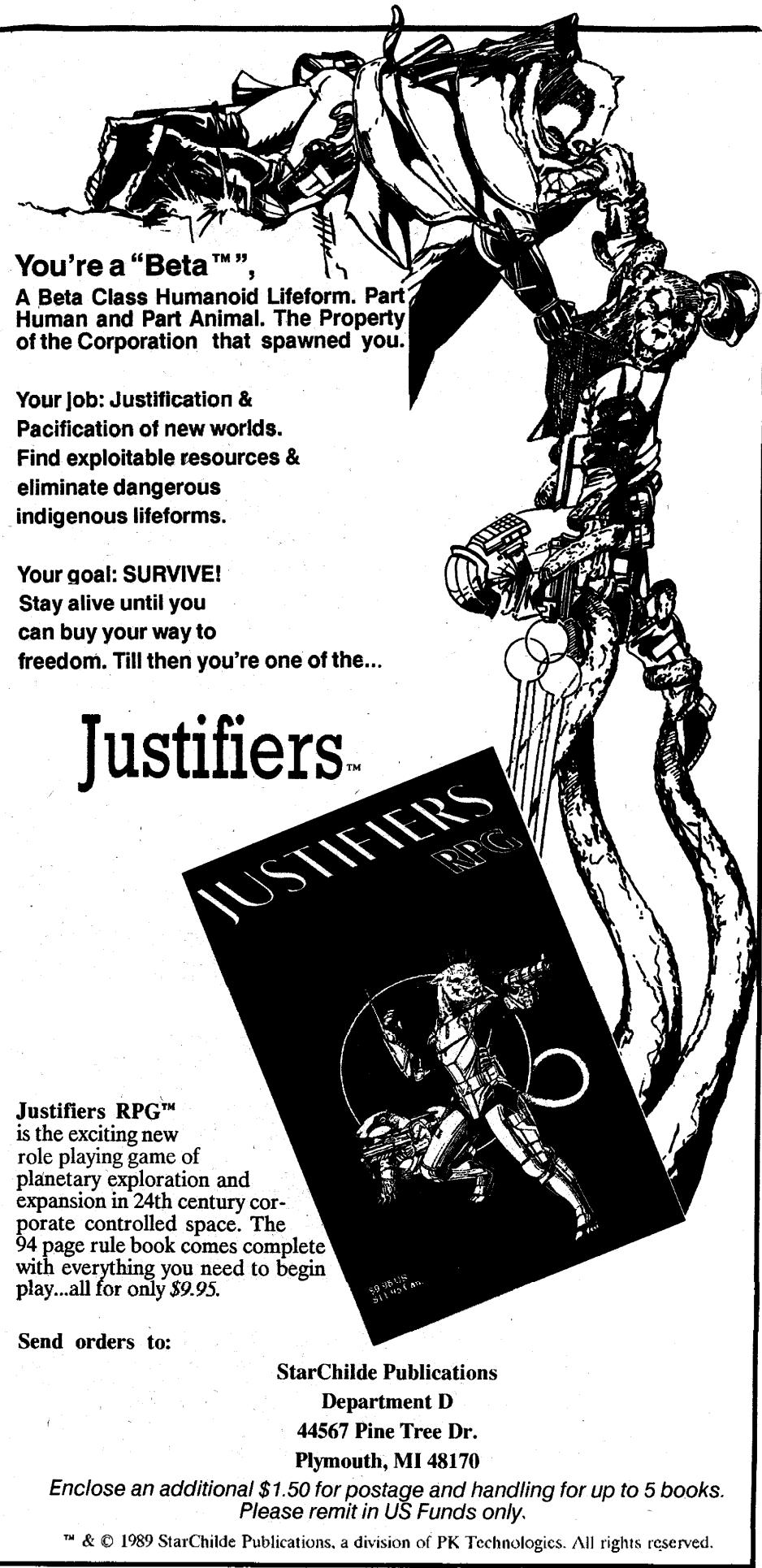
4. Wemicks have the tracking proficiency, as per the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, page 64, with a +4 modifier for their senses of smell. They gain a -3 bonus to surprise (thanks to camouflage) in their native grasslands, but only -1 elsewhere, because their natural coloration best fits grasslands. Their keen senses reduce by half all attempts by their opponents to hide or remain *invisible* (including all bonuses for surprise, etc.), but this works only if the lion-men are concentrating on it.

5. The average male wemic has a strength of 14 in. his human body; the average female has a strength of 12. Patriarchs have a strength of 15, chiefs 16, and kings 18. Bonuses to hit and damage from their strengths are applicable. A wemic has a 1-in-12 chance to have an exceptional dexterity of 15 (75%) or 16 (25%), with all appropriate bonuses to armor class and saving throws.

6. The wemic's roar causes *fear* (as the spell) in a 6" radius, to all normal animals (such as horses) and to all creatures having less than one hit die. The effects last 2-8 rounds. Well-trained animals, such as war horses, have +4 on their saves.

Wemicks may use their rear claws on large opponents by raking if they make no weapon attacks in that round, but only if they are attacking creatures of huge or gigantic size (12' +). Rear claws do 2-7/2-7 hp damage.

The wemic's leap attack is very powerful. It is made at normal probabilities, with no consideration for armor aside from shield and dexterity, and inflicts 2-12 hp damage from the sheer weight of the lion-man, knocking the victim down. If this attack is successful, the wemic attacks with all four claws at +4 to hit (with considerations for armor) in the same round. If at least two claws hit, the wemic strikes with his weapon automatically on this and all following rounds, hanging on with his claws, until forcibly removed. (If the claw attacks are unsuccessful, the

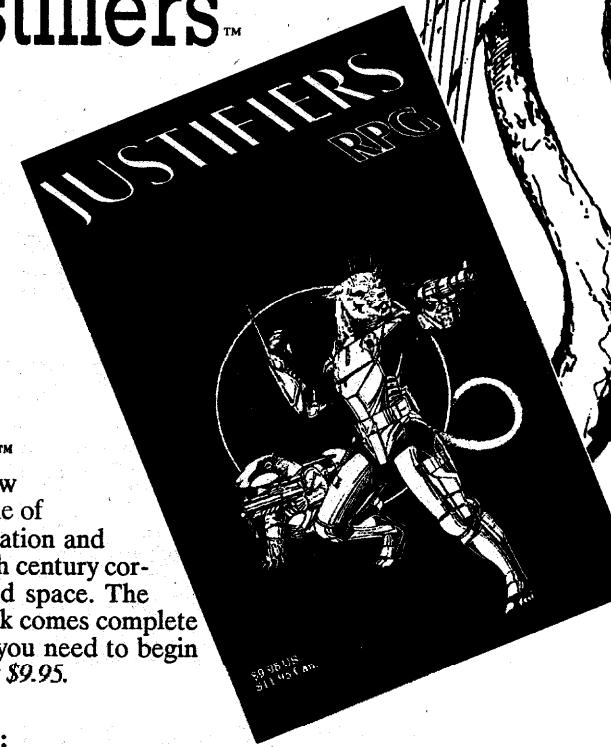


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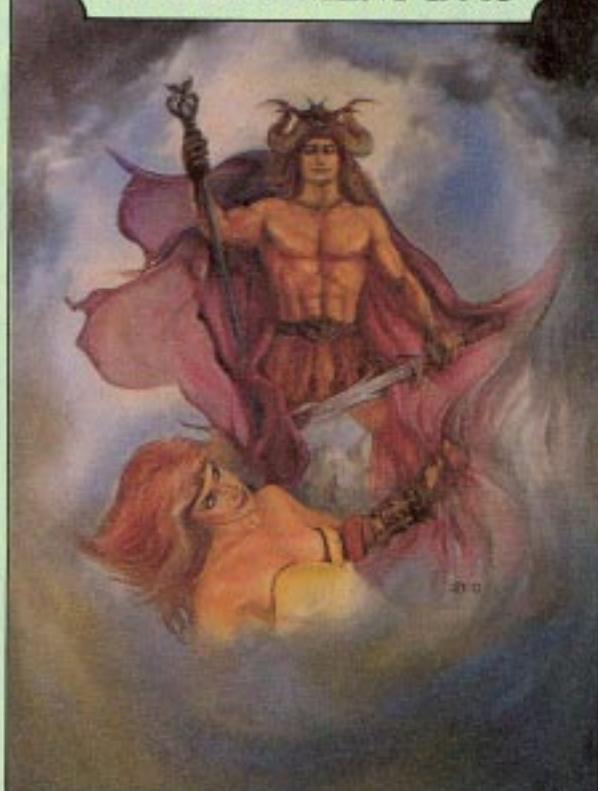
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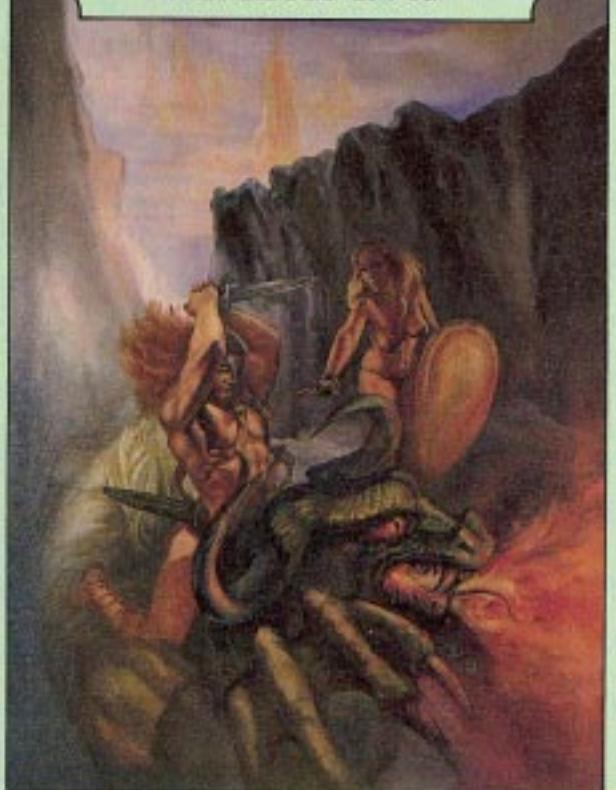
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EDITORIAL

Ten Good Things About Demons

I'm sure that every loyal reader of DRAGON® Magazine is aware of the little controversy surrounding the exclusion of demons and devils from the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. We've received a rather large response to the recent comments in "The Game Wizards" in issue #154 and "Sage Advice" in issue #155. Being the cheerful sort of let's-pour-more-gasoline-on-the-fire guy that I am, I have a few comments of my own to add—but not about whether we should have demons and devils. That's boring. I mean, if you want 'em, you got 'em; just look them up in the older rule books.

And I'm not going to address the issue of censorship, which some readers used to compare the anti-demon problem to the rule of Nazi and Communist dictatorships. Get serious, people!

Something does need to be said, however, about the reasons why demons and devils are good for a fantasy role-playing game campaign. I mean, why did they wind up in fantasy games to begin with? A few readers took a poke at this topic in their letters, and I'd like to expand on their comments and (forgive me) play devil's advocate. In this editorial, I'll pick a round figure and say 10 good things about the use of these much-maligned monsters in fantasy role-playing games.

Of course, I'm doing this with the understanding that those who read this can tell that I am not saying that demons and their ilk are good. (I don't believe in them, anyway, but that's beside the point.) Great works of literature like Dante's *Divine Comedy* mention devils and demons, and the little boogers play important roles in those works, right? Bad roles, yes—and that's the point!

So, on with my list of 10 good things about demons. The list applies equally well to devils, daemons, etc., but "demon" covers the field pretty well.

1. Demons are easily identifiable from classic and modern sources, from Milton's *Paradise Lost* to *The Exorcist*. Everyone knows what demons are and what they're about. With such readily identifiable foes, there's little question as to what their motives are (always bad) and what you should do about them (get rid of them).

2. Demons are unrepentantly evil. No matter what you do or say to them, they are not going to get any better. This is good in game terms because characters then have no moral qualms about trashing these monsters. A DM can have a tribe of

chaotic-good orcs, and there are such things as good dragons. But demons are just bad, and you can't argue with them about anything. Let 'em argue with your *vorpal weapon* instead.

3. Demons offer lots of variety as foes of adventurers. They come in all shapes and sizes, and they have such a bewildering array of magical and physical powers that most players are hard pressed to recall any one such beast's specific abilities ("Is this the kind that's immune to poison gas and lava, or what?"). If a party is faced with a mixed force of demons, the characters must simply hope for the best and throw everything they've got at their opponents. Being flexible, complex, and unpredictable, demons make great foes to use in almost any campaign.

4. Demons are extremely powerful. Even a weak demon can kick booty on most low-level groups, and a carefully played and powerful demon is a nightmare for even 20th-level lords and wizards. A very powerful foe is better able to stand up to the combined attack routines of a character party, which prolongs the excitement of a game and makes a final victory for the PCs all the sweeter. Demons are notoriously good at escaping by *teleportation*, too, which keeps them alive in the campaign for many sessions ("Dang, not you again!").

5. Demons can serve as directors of evil forces. Being so darn powerful, it's natural that even a dumb demon will enjoy the chance to create its own force of bodyguards and soldiers. Smart demons make superb commanders; if your characters believe in going for the guy in charge, they'll have their hands full dealing with both the demon and all of his henchcritters. A wide assortment of monsters can be gathered together by a demonic commander, who would probably make a fine equal-opportunity employer ("Orcs, bugbears, ixitzachitl, hey—they're all the same to me."). This makes the challenge all the greater for the heroic characters.

6. Demons have lots of treasure, you bet. Not much more to add to this one, except that they might tend to use their magical weapons and defensive devices against characters who attack them. What's the good of having a *unholy paladin bonger* +4 go to waste on the treasure heap? Use it or lose it.

7. Demons offer new realms of travel. Wild new universes are opened up to characters who pursue these monsters into the degenerate vacation lands of the Abyss, the Nine Hells, and so on. You can develop whole campaigns in which characters assault and destroy the infernal holdings of certain major monsters who have managed to make themselves too obnox-

ious to be allowed to live ("Paladins, Mr. Asmodeus! Zillions of 'em! They blew up the front gate and now they're gonna—" **ka-BOOOOOOM!!!!**).

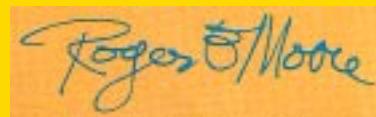
8. The behavior of demons serves to emphasize the value of good behavior. Demons lie, steal, torture, pillage, murder, and pass bad checks. They enslave whole nations without asking anyone's permission. They raise the condition of being a jerk to an art form. It's up to the good characters to pound down their doors with +8 sledgehammers and get the demons straightened out, preferably straightened out prone on the floor. If there was ever a reason for being good, then demons are certainly part of that reason.

9. Demons make adventures more exciting. Certainly, with all of their powers and abilities, they add considerable punch to a campaign. Only grotesquely powerful woogies like beholders, great wyrms, and mage/priest liches with *staves of power* can match the charge you feel when your wizard finds a Type VI flamer smoking up his laboratory.

10. Finally, fighting and defeating demons give you the sense that you are accomplishing something in the game. Readers may recall my editorial in DRAGON issue #144, in which I recounted an epic battle waged between a paladin and a demon in a campaign that I ran some years ago. That paladin made his mark by winning that ferocious battle, and he had no end of fame and glory after that (his player was pretty tickled, too). Heroes get the epics; demons get the footnotes.

And there you have it. Of course, I don't mean to put down all of the other terrible monsters in the AD&D game universe (I'm fond of beholders, myself). Skip Williams pointed out that giants and dragons in the AD&D 2nd Edition game are much more powerful now; many of them easily share some of these 10 "good things" in common with devils, demons, etc. But in the end, demons still rate in my book as being among the best of the bad.

So much for patting them on the head. Now it's time to kick some demon butt. Make it count.



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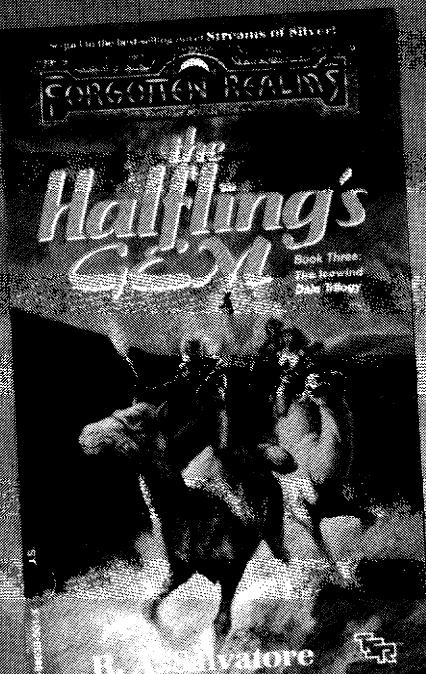
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THE DUNGEON ALONE

One player and one Dungeon Master
are all you really need

by Tom Little

The young adept places one foot cautiously on the rusty wrought-iron ladder. She has come in search of the fabled emerald pendant of Alcar-Than. It is Halloween night, and a full moon has lit her way through the cemetery, past the fire beetles, centipedes, and wild dogs. After searching among the weathered headstones, she has at last found the entrance to the underground tombs, concealed within the dry, overgrown pumpkin patch. Lantern lit, shield and footman's mace at the ready, she descends into the dungeon—alone.

Alone? How can she hope to survive without a fighter to ward off the monsters, a wizard to overcome the enchantments that had most certainly been placed in the dungeon, and a thief to pick the locks, disarm the traps, and uncover the treasure? She must be crazy to undertake such a quest without a full company of adventurers to aid her!

But she is not, and neither is her player. It is true that the AD&D® and D&D® games were designed under the assumption that their adventures will be played by a balanced group of four or more characters run by as many players. However, the single-player adventure has advantages and should not be overlooked, even though the DM faces new challenges in order to maintain game balance.

One reason for conducting a single-player adventure is practicality. Even with an interested group of players, it may be difficult for a number of people to arrange acceptable playing times over the course

of an extended adventure or campaign. Very often, one or two may be eager to play but have to postpone a game because the rest of the group is unavailable.

The single-player adventure also encourages character development and identification in a way that a group adventure cannot rival. A single player's game decisions are not artificially constrained by having to stay with the party or following the plan the group agreed on. Also, the single player does not become a follower while the more vocal members of the group make all the important decisions. Every decision must be made by the player, and this provides a greater sense of participation and of personal achievement in a successful adventure. A player whose PC is adventuring alone (without even henchmen or NPCs) will usually feel a stronger sense of identification with the PC—and role-playing is, after all, what role-playing games are about.

Lastly, the single-player adventure often makes sense in naturally occurring game situations. One PC may have a special task fall upon him, or he may wish to conduct private investigations outside the context of his group. He may be separated from his party by accident or have to abandon a quest due to incapacitation. There are many situations in which single-player gaming is called for.

Please take note that a single-player adventure is not the same as a solo adventure. A solo adventure is a game session played and conducted by only one person, in which printed matter from a commercial module or correspondent takes the

place of a Dungeon Master, or where some random adventure generator is used (such as Appendix A: Random Dungeon Generation, in the AD&D 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*). By contrast, a single-player adventurer is a one-on-one game session between a DM and a single player. This is clearly the more preferable of the two alternatives; if it were not, there would be no need for any DMs at all!

Katherine Kerr, in "The Solo Scenario" (DRAGON® issue #73) previously addressed the problems of planning a single-player adventure. The challenges must be scaled down, and the story line must be devised to meet the special requirements of the PC's class and level.

Planning an adventure, as all DMs know, is only the beginning; often the toughest challenges come in conducting the game. In the case of the single-player adventure, the DM may find it extraordinarily difficult to conduct the game fairly and yet keep the PC out of the jaws of death. How is this done? How can a DM conduct an interesting, critical adventure that will challenge a solitary player and still be survivable? This article is a summary of some of the essentials needed to survive the single-player adventure.

First we must ask what is required. What problems will appear for a lone player that will not appear in group play? The single-player adventure must be designed to solve or avoid these problems.

Problem one: If the PC is rendered unconscious in combat (or otherwise), no one will be available to heal him. Thus a single unlucky die roll can utterly destroy a single-player adventure. In group play, it is usually only a serious error in judgment that leads to the destruction of the entire party. In single play, it may be just bad luck.

Problem two: If the goal of the adventure cannot be achieved in a single attempt (and it would probably be an uninteresting session if it could), the player will have to retreat to a place of safety to recuperate, then approach the adventure for a second time. If the challenges are the same, the single player will probably not get much farther than he did the first time. A large party can use sheer fighting power to probe deeper levels of a dungeon or more remote regions of an outdoor setting. A single player will probably not have all the resources necessary to get to the end of a sizeable adventure and return to safety alive. He will find himself endlessly repeating the initial stages of the adventure, unable to get past the first obstacles without needing to retreat and recuperate.

Problem three: The single player cannot brainstorm with fellow players to determine what to do next. He has only himself and the DM to rely on to keep the adventure on track. This places a special burden on the DM in his interaction with the player. How can the DM combine the role of referee with the role of advisor without



spoiling the game?

The methods suggested here to deal with these problems have been game-tested with low-level PCs. There are probably as many solutions to the problems above as there are DMs. These methods have been guided by the philosophy that it is character development that makes an interesting game, and that character development requires both a genuine challenge and the long-term survival of the PC.

Survival

The single PC, particularly a low-level one, faces the constant risk of instant death. In one or two rounds, his hit points may drop below zero, rendering him either dead or unconscious and defenseless. At a single toss of the dice, he may be poisoned or paralyzed, with no one around to effect a cure. Many typically encountered emergencies are utterly lethal without other characters at hand to take life-saving action.

One solution to the instant-death problem is to simply let the PC live-somehow —no matter what happens. This is obviously a gross violation of the letter of the game; if the player is aware that this policy is being employed, he will soon lose interest in playing a game without even the slightest threat of failure.

Another solution is to employ NPCs. This works well if done sparingly. The problem is that too many NPCs can make the game a group adventure again, but with the DM overburdened by taking on so many secondary roles that the game as a whole suffers. Remember that every NPC added for the purpose of assisting the player reduces the player's sense of challenge and participation. This problem is worse with NPCs than it is with other PCs, since the DM always knows the best solution to any game situation. If only one or two NPCs are employed, much of the problem of instant death still remains. Two PCs do not have the survival capability of a full party.

The best solution to this problem is to relax the rules a little, but to do so in a premeditated, orderly way. Do not wait until a PC faces death to ask, "Which rule should I bend now?" This quickly leads to

the guaranteed-survival scenario described above. Here are some suggestions for coping with common situations:

Unconsciousness in combat: Unless the creatures being fought are absolutely fighting to kill, have them abandon the PC or take him prisoner. The PC will wake up some hours later, possibly with a way to escape and recuperate before attempting the adventure again. To emphasize the seriousness of the incident, the PC should suffer some important loss: armor, possessions, or perhaps even a point or two off a suitable ability score. Note that some creatures will kill under all circumstances; in these cases, one must obey the dice. A party of goblins, for example, might strip the PC of valuables and abandon him; wild dogs might eat the PC's rations but would not attack further; but a stirge would certainly kill its victim.

Characters should have a fair chance to run from a confrontation. This may not always be possible, but when it is, a bonus should be made to a single PC's chance to escape and evade pursuit. (It is obviously easier to run and hide alone than with a whole party trying to do the same.)

A bit of advice to players in solo scenarios: Don't be foolish and count on miracles. If you were alone underground and saw four armed thieves coming your way, what would you do? He who hides or runs away . . . well, you know the rest. A little common sense makes life easier on the DM and adds to the feeling of realism in the adventure.

Fatal traps or tricks: It is best to avoid using these, unless you intend to give ample warning and sufficient information for the PC to avoid the danger. If such things are used, allow copious saving throws, dexterity checks, partial effects, duds, and so on.

Poison and paralysis: These might be avoided altogether, but in the interests of variety and challenge they can be included. There should be a greater chance of avoiding the effect, however, since, there will be no high-level cleric around to effect an immediate cure. Tables I, II, and III show systems for using poison and paralysis geared toward increasing the survival potential of a single PC. These systems are also suitable for use with a full low-level party whose members cannot hope for an instant cure.

To use the tables, first make the appropriate saving throw. If the PC fails to save, then roll 1d106 (for poison) or 1d20 (for paralysis) and find the roll in the column corresponding to the saving-throw bonus used. For example, if a PC is bitten by a giant centipede and fails his save, 1d100 is rolled, giving 42. The column on Table I headed "+ 4" is used, since centipede poison has a saving-throw bonus of +4. In this column, 42 corresponds to unconsciousness for 1-2 turns.

Table II shows suggested onset times for poison. These delays allow time for the PC to do something (at least he can hide!)

before the poison takes effect.

The procedure is similar for paralysis, but the effects may occur immediately, especially if some magical or supernatural agency is the cause.

Finally, it makes sense to relax the rules demanding long periods of rest following unconsciousness. This does not mean that the PC should be able to rise to his feet and resume the adventure where he left off. However, he should be allowed to defend himself as he retreats to a place of safety. (Depending on the situation, experience points for monsters killed under these conditions might be withheld.)

The finite dungeon

The second problem, devising an adventure that can be tackled in successive stages, is addressed by the concept of the finite dungeon. "Finite dungeon" is a phrase used to suggest an adventure in which challenges successfully met need not be repeated. For example, if a goblin lair is raided and destroyed, there will be no more goblins to trouble the adventurer if he must pass that way again.

This, of course, is often the normal result of play. If the adventure is devised in terms of set encounters, then the DM will remove these encounters from his key after the creatures have been killed or chased off. However, if wandering-monster encounters are also used, the issue becomes more complicated. One should not do away with the interesting unpredictability of random encounters entirely, and keeping track of the motions of every band of creatures is impossible.

The whole point is to use an intelligent system for regulating encounters during play. You may have devised a perfect random-encounter table for some portion of the adventure, suited to the player's level and ability; but if the player is led through the same challenge repeatedly, even the best scenario will wear thin.

The solution is to have the probability of random encounters reflect the actual population of monsters in the area. Thus a finite dungeon holds a finite number of creatures, but the creatures are not restricted to set locations. Instead, the probability of encountering them at random decreases as their number goes down.

It is easy to derive a realistic formula for the probability of encounters based on the monster population, the area over which they range, their movement rate, and group size. The probabilities given by such a formula could be scaled down during play as monsters are killed. If you prefer the expediency of standard encounter tables, you can still reduce the probability of encounters as the game goes along. Here is one simple way to get the desired effect:

Suppose the periodic check indicates that giant rats are encountered. You have determined in planning the adventure that only 20 giant rats are present in the area. The first time rats are indicated by the

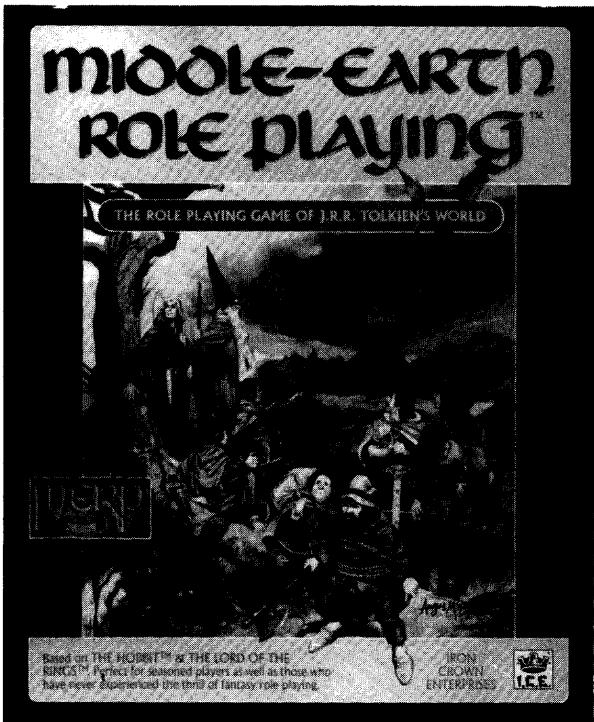
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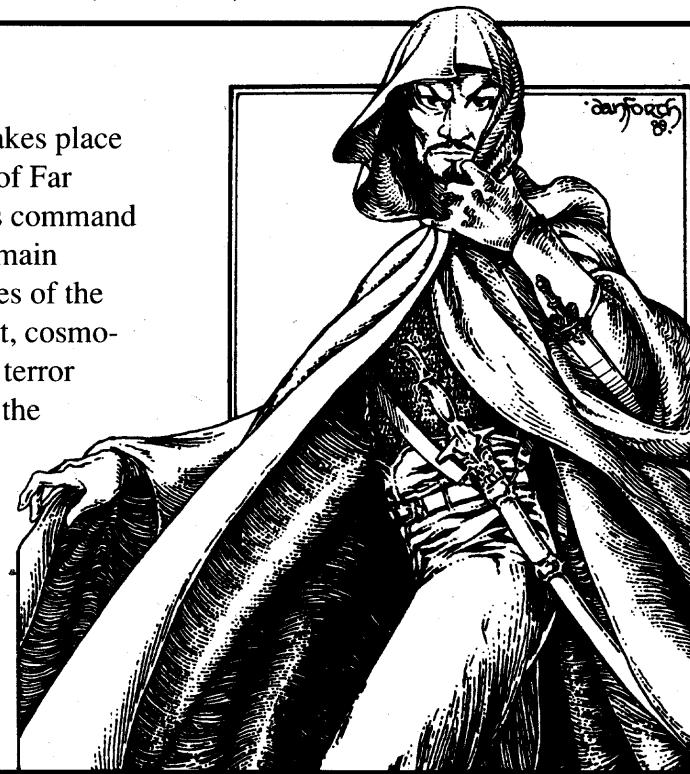
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roll, treat it as a normal encounter. Suppose six rats attack the PC; four are killed, and two escape. The next time the encounter check indicates giant rats, roll d20. If 1, 2, 3 or 4 appears, then there is no encounter because four of the 20 rats are dead. As more rats are killed, the chance drops further, until after our hero has dispatched 20 rats, a "rat encounter" will always be "no encounter". The monster populations need not correspond to some particular die—you can round off. For example, a population of 15 skeletons could be handled by rolling 1d8, allowing one "no encounter" for every two skeletons killed. Thus, after four skeletons had been put to rest, a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d8 would signify no encounter.

This system has the effect of causing most encounters to happen toward the beginning of the campaign. After many of the creatures are dispatched, the encounter probability goes down, and the PC can explore other areas of the dungeon without excessive worry about random encounters. This has the desired result that the player may progress to further stages of the adventure without having to repeat the initial confrontations, yet it preserves the interest and facility of random-encounter determination.

It is understood in this scheme that monster populations are not quickly replenished with reinforcements unless the DM so dictates, so it is likely that there will be no one in the area to reset traps after they have been set off or to otherwise interfere with the PC's progress through the adventure (assuming, of course, that the PC has killed most of the original dungeon population).

If the finite-dungeon scheme for random encounters is not used, it is recommended that set encounters be the only ones employed, perhaps with an occasional random encounter to encourage haste!

The friendly DM

The role of the DM in the single-player adventure must be somewhat different than it is in a group game. The DM no

longer finds himself settling disputes between players or struggling to keep the game moving through long-winded player discussions. Instead, he is confronted with the challenge of single-handedly entertaining the player, even though the player must make all the decisions!

The DM should not assume the role of another player, criticizing or congratulating the player on his choices (not during play, anyway). Obviously, the DM knows the right solution to every problem, as he knows what lies down each corridor and inside every chamber. An uncertain player who would normally wait for the opinions of the other members of the party may appeal to the DM for help. The DM should not give in to the urge to control the player's decision-making prerogative. He can and should answer questions about game rules and about what the PC sees, hears, and has knowledge of (in excruciating detail if necessary), but he should never answer the question "What should I do now?" no matter how cleverly worded. The player's sense of accomplishment at the end of the game will suffer if he does.

What, then, should the DM do when the player is lost, frustrated, confused, or misdirected? Must he simply sit back and watch the game plunge into oblivion? Of course not. DMs have always found it necessary, from time to time, to drop hints into the adventure by way of NPCs, scrawled messages, *magic mouths*, and other such gimmicks. Some have even resorted to divine intervention to put players back on the straight and narrow. In a multiplayer game, such measures can be reserved for emergencies. In a single-player adventure, the game is likely to be routinely mired in such predicaments.

Lending assistance calls for more subtlety on the part of the DM. Perhaps the best procedure is to encourage the player to try *something*. Don't allow the player to wallow in indecision. If the action he comes up with is a disastrous choice, block it somehow. (The door won't open, the corridor is blocked with rubble, the NPC turns to leave, the stopper won't come out

of the flask, the lantern goes out when reading the scroll, etc.) If the player does something even remotely sensible, go with it. You may be able to redirect the adventure later. It is better to keep things moving than to stick tenaciously to a precharted path that the player can't find.

All of the above is sound advice in any game, but it is crucial for the single-player adventure. If a group player becomes frustrated or confused, he can take a break while the others work out the problem, and return with a better mood when things get rolling again. A solo player who gets stuck cannot move into the background and wait for things to change. The DM must help the player keep his morale up.

The best advice the DM can give to the single player is no advice at all. Instead, he must be subtle and unobtrusive with his hints and flexible enough to allow the reins to remain the hands of the player at all times. If the DM allows the player to give up control of his PC, the game becomes a zero-player adventure.

The single-player adventure is too often overlooked in the AD&D game system. It does present special challenges for both DM and player, but the rewards in terms of character development definitely make it worthwhile.

Continued from page 54

wemic still attacks with his weapon at +4 to hit, because the target is prone.) The only way to remove the wemic from the victim is by inflicting at least 8 hp damage on it in a single attack. The victim can attack, but at -2 to hit.

7. Some wemic tribes give each male 3-6 javelins in a back sling. Regarding weapons: 35% of a pride will use short swords, 35% use stone clubs, and 30% use hand axes. A few (10%) prides have learned how to make and use short bows. Nearly all use tough hide shields to improve their overall armor class by one.

8. A patriarch has maximum hit points. Chiefs and kings are described in the *Monstrous Compendium*. Ω

Table I
Variant Effects of Poison

If a saving throw vs. poison fails, roll 1d100 and find the result under the column corresponding to the poison's saving-throw bonus (STB).

Effect	Saving-throw bonus							
	+5	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Nausea/weakness*	1-59	1-39	1-29	1-19	1-9	1-4	1-4	1-4
Unconsciousness*	60-89	40-79	30-69	20-49	10-29	5-19	5-9	5-9
Acute disease	90-94	80-89	70-84	5-59	30-39	20-24	10-14	10-11
Chronic disease	95-98	90-94	85-89	60-69	40-49	25-29	15-19	12-14
Special **	99	95-97	90-94	70-79	50-59	30-34	20-24	15-19
Death	00	98-00	95-00	80-00	60-00	35-00	25-00	20-00

* Duration of effect equals 1d6 - STB turns, with a minimum of one turn.

** A permanent ability loss (1d6 - STB in points, with a minimum loss of one point) and incapacitation for 1d4 days. A constitution check or system-shock roll may be allowed to avoid the permanent loss, making it temporary (2-8 days).

Table II
Onset of the Effects of Poison

	Onset of minor effect *	Onset of full effect **
Fast poison	1d4 rounds	+1d4 rounds
Normal poison	1d20 rounds	+1d12 rounds
Slow poison	4d6 turns	+1d6 turns

* This is the delay time until the poison first shows its effects.

** This is the time over which the first effects of the poison become stronger until they reach full effect. The DM can arrange for increasing penalties over this period until they match the poison's full effect (e.g., if a fast poison causes 20 hp damage, and the full effect strikes after three rounds, the PC can lose 7 hp the first round, 7 hp the second round, and 6 hp the third round).

Table III
Variant Effects of Paralysis

If a saving throw vs. paralysis fails, roll 1d20 and find the result under the column corresponding to the paralysis effect's saving-throw bonus (STB).

	Saving-throw bonus		
	+2 or more	+1 to -1	-2 or less
Temporary paralysis*	1-6	1-3	1
Temporary paralysis and dexterity loss **	7-12	4-6	2
Temporary paralysis, dexterity and constitution loss**	13-18	7-9	3
Permanent paralysis	19-20	10-20	4-20

* Duration of effect equals 1d20 - STB turns, with a minimum of one turn.

** Here, 1d6-STB points are lost (minimum of one point). The onset of the effect is either 1-12 rounds or immediate.

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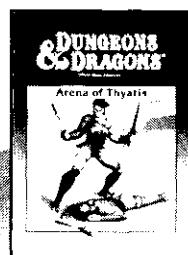
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Next Stop:

EveningStar

A practical sort of village from the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting

by Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb

Editor's introduction

Enthusiasm for one's work is a wonderful trait, though it does have its drawbacks. The dynamic team of Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb was able to generate an enormous amount of material for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Adventures hard-bound campaign book for the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. However, Jeff and Ed created too much material, and some of it had to be cut to make everything else fit in. So what can you do with a neat little town in Cormyr that is suddenly cut off from the rest of its nation in the book?

"We could give it to DRAGON® Magazine," said Jeff. And so they did.

Eveningstar is one of a series of towns and cities described in FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures, each especially designed as a base of operations for adventurers. Each town is described in practical terms: who rules, who defends, what can you buy, who's worth knowing (and who may cause problems), and where all the local adventures happen to be. The NPCs are described in a shorthand system that gives the alignment, race, sex, class, and level of each such character. For example, Lord Tessaril Winter (CG hf F10, previously W12) is a chaotic-good human female and a 10th-level fighter (she was formerly a 12-level wizard).

Eveningstar appears in the Cyclopedia of the Realms, one of the booklets in the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set, on page 43. It also makes a guest appearance in FRE3 Waterdeep. This article expands on this information greatly, turning this "crossroads village" into a place from which your group's player characters may explore the mysteries of a fantastic land.

Welcome to Eveningstar!

Eveningstar

Who Rules: Lord Tessaril Winter (CG hf F10, previously W12), who owns a *necklace of missiles* and a *wand of magic missiles*. She once masqueraded as a male adventurer, "Tessar the Mage," and is per-

ceptive, considerate, and utterly loyal to Azoun.

Who Really Rules: Azoun IV, "the Purple Dragon," King of Cormyr. Azoun's rule is maintained by: Lord Tessaril; Tzin Tzummer, the local herald (NG hm B7); Auldo Morim, the town clerk and purser (NG hm F3); and the local Purple Dragon contingent.

Population: 800 (estimated), including temple folk but excluding travelers and outlying farmers.

Major Products: Wine, parchment,

wool, farm produce (milk, cheese, eggs, poultry, mutton, beans, carrots, parsnips).

Armed Forces: Nine Purple Dragons (the Official Cormyrian army, also called the Purple Dragoons) and four hostlers. The local militia numbers 45 well-trained 1st-level fighters and four 2nd-level fighters, all poorly armed and armored.

Notable Mages: Aside from Lord Tessaril, Eveningstar has only one known mage: Syndair Thorn, weaver and dressmaker (CG hf W5), who uses her magic to entertain and to tutor mages.



Notable Churches:

- The House of The Morning, temple complex to Lathander; Patriarch Charisbonde "Trueservant" Belon (NG hm P11); 28 priests, 170 followers.

- No other temples or shrines exist, but the Lord allows temporary shrines to be set up in the market for up to three days (dawn of the first to sunset of the last).

Notable Rogues' and Thieves'

Guilds: None known. At least one Zhen-tarim agent is active in Eveningstar (Maethlin son of Maglor; Maethlin is the apothecary—NE hm T5—and secretly makes poisons).

Equipment Shops: Items costing 100 gp or less are readily available, but there is only a 10% chance of finding items costing from 101-499 gp; more expensive items are available only by DM's whim. In the wintertime, only items costing 10 gp or less are available, with a 10% chance for items costing 11-99 gp.

Adventurers' Quarters: The village has only two inns (aside from the temple, which houses guests of most good and neutral faiths for a nightly fee). A third inn, The Welcoming Hand, is a burnt-out ruin, although there are plans to rebuild. The available lodgings are:

- The Lonesome Tankard inn and tavern: warm, famous, and welcoming—the locals'

nightly meeting-place (excellent quality, cheap; see FRE3 Waterdeep for maps and details).

- The Golden Unicorn Inn, a cozy, quiet backstreet place (good quality, cheap).

Important Characters:

- Arbold Tethyr (LN hm F2), a fat and greedy master harness-maker. He owns a wagon making and repairing shop, a rooming house, and a hardware store.

- Dunman Kiriag (NG hm F5), a jovial, kind man who is secretly a Harper.

- Jelde Asturien (NG hm P9) of Lathander, formerly "Semoor Wolftooth," a wary, sarcastic retired Knight of Myth Drannor, who is the temple's secular liaison and is never without his *ring of spell storing*.

- Maea "Iron Eyes" Dulgussir (CN hf W4), a secret mage who owns and runs the Low Lantern tavern, dance hall, and theater.

Important Features in Town: The small, quiet, beautiful village of Eveningstar lies where the High Horn trade road is joined by the road from Dhedluk. A prosperous farmers' market and travelers' way-stop, it commands the mouth of a rocky gorge which carries the River Starwater down from the Stonelands, and provides an easy route up into the rocky heights of that dangerous region.

The Eveningstar gorge is the only major break in a craggy, limestone rock escarp-

ment that rises like a wall along the High Horn trade road from Tyrluk to near Arabel, barring the easy expansion of Cormyr northward. There are many tracks and scrambles up and down the "Stonecliff," but no other routes by which mounted men or livestock less agile than goats and sheep can pass from Cormyr to the high moorland of the Stonelands, and vice versa. The Stonecliff stands like an everpresent backdrop to the peaceful greenery of the village and the farms around. The gorge itself is thickly grown with thickets and scrub woodland, and it is the favorite playground of the bolder local children, who in season pick many baskets of berries there.

The village of Eveningstar is full of trees and gardens. It rises out of the surrounding farms "like an orchard with buildings in it," as Elminster says, dominated by the Stonecliff and the prosperous farm of the spired temple of Lathander that sprawls in the mouth of the gorge. It is one of the bucolic beauty spots of Cormyr, a place of soft, glorious sunsets and sunrises, and gentle, starlit summer skies.

Local Lore: Part way up the western side of the Eveningstar gorge is the entrance to the "Haunted Halls," a subterranean stronghold built by the dwarves long ago for a human bandit-lord, Rivior, and



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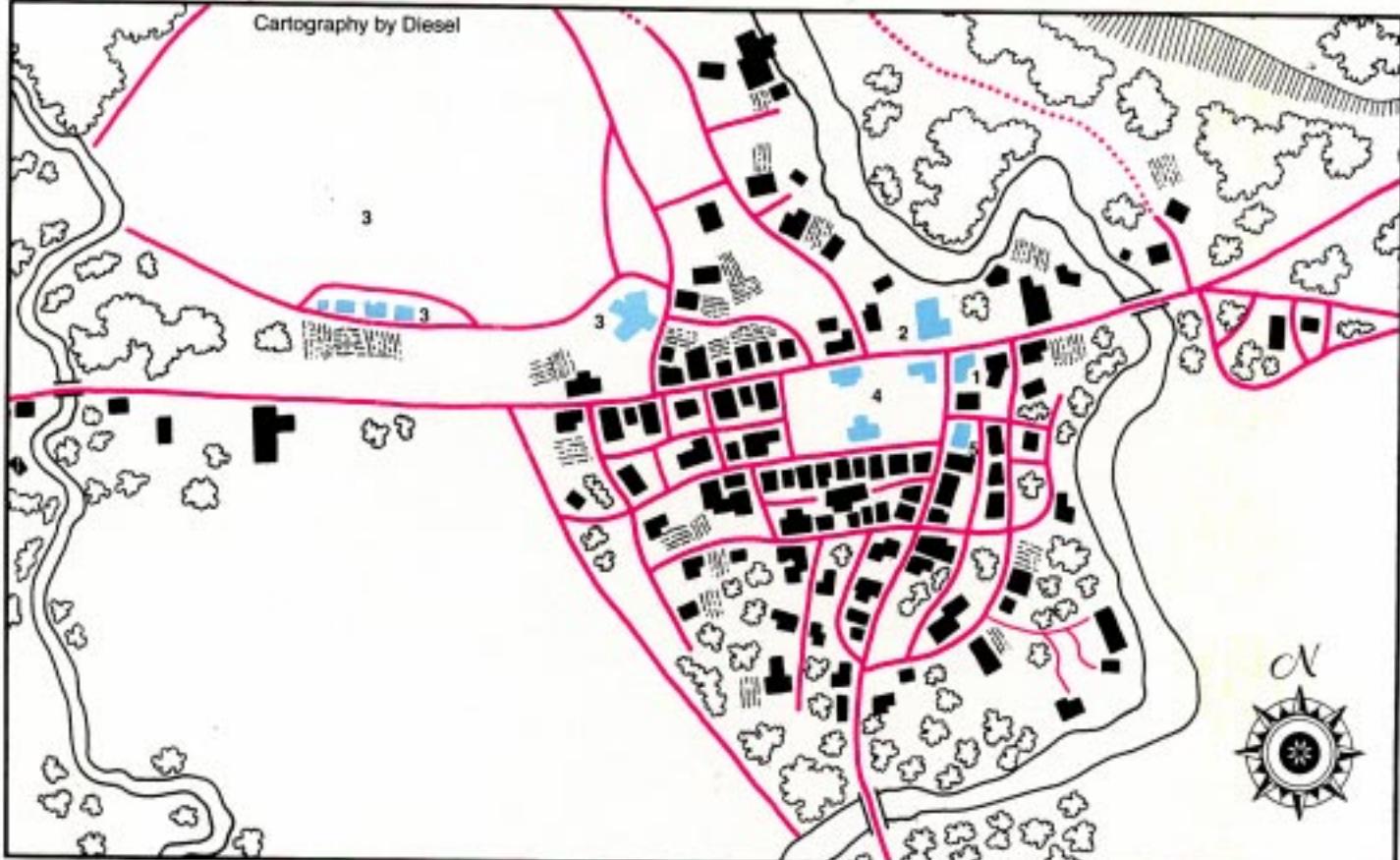
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Cormyr Map Key

1. The Lonesome Tankard inn
2. Eveningstar Hall (meeting house, guard barracks, jail)
3. The House of the Morning (temple complex of Lathander)
4. Market Square
5. House of Lord Tessaril Winter

since become home to kobolds and worse.

Rivior was slain some two hundred winters ago, when Enchara, Warrior-Queen of the fledgling realm of Espanir (since absorbed into Cormyr), knowing Rivior's band to be short of food, tricked his band out into the winter snows with a false "desperation food and pay" caravan, and slew the bandits to the last man.

The deserted hold was soon home to monsters (rumored to have been brought there by evil Zhentarim mages who took up abode in the hall to discourage intruders), and was often visited by adventuring bands seeking to win experience and fortune. The undead remains of some of these intrepid (and reckless) souls gave the former bandit -hold its present name.

Among the more famous adventuring exploits of the halls are the titanic battle between the young, unproven Knights of Myth Drannor (for whom the halls was their first real adventure) and the evil mage Whisper, and the explosive encounter between the Company of the Unicorn and a circle of nine levitating, fireball-casting, black-robed mages before the



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entrance to the halls. The knights dealt with the immediate threat of these villains, but the depths of the halls themselves have bred further monsters to replace the losses.

Despite continuing patrols, the Haunted Halls remain the lairs of many dangerous monsters. There are also continual problems with trolls in Eveningstar's vicinity, particularly to the east, in the troll-caves traditionally known as the "Caverns of the Claws."

Eveningstar's farmers keep sheep on the edge of the Stonelands plateau (in the commonly held, stonewalled "High Pasture"), and they gather once every six days for a market, bringing produce that is often snapped up by visiting caravans.

The village is a favorite stopover for overland caravans, most of whose masters are good friends of Dunman Kiriag, who keeps the Lonesome Tankard, one of the best inns to be found anywhere. On many soft summer evenings, dozens of caravan-masters can be seen fishing from the Starwater bridge and enjoying a pipe or two, or simply strolling the evening streets, while their caravan guards bathe in one of the Starwater's swimming holes to drive off the dust and sweat of the road, put on their best, and slip out to the Low Lantern for some late-night fun.

Eveningstar is also one of the favorite spots of King Azoun, who likes to come here to relax. He usually comes cloaked in magical disguise by Vangerderhast (who accompanies him). He enjoys a stroll, a tankard or two at the Lonesome Tankard, and an evening of dancing at the Lantern. More than once he has been moved to shed his disguise there, usually at finding Tessaril dancing too. The locals regard Azoun as their own, with respect and affection. Zhentarim agents with poisoned blades once came for Azoun in the Lan-

tern, but were attacked barehanded by everyone in the place, who rushed to form a human shield-ring around the King, until the Purple Dragons, alerted by excited youths up after their bedtimes, came with Tessaril to rout the intruders.

Visitors used to the late or all-night hours kept in many cities are often disappointed to find that except for the inns, the Low Lantern, and the temple, Eveningstar completely closes down early in the

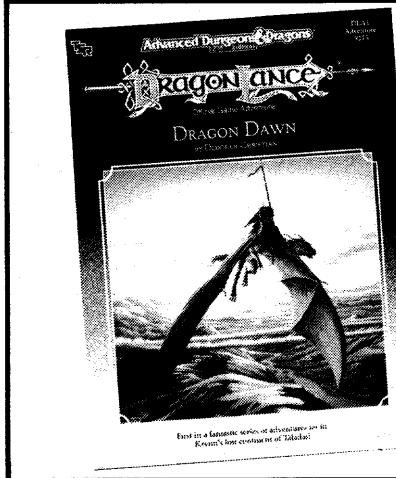
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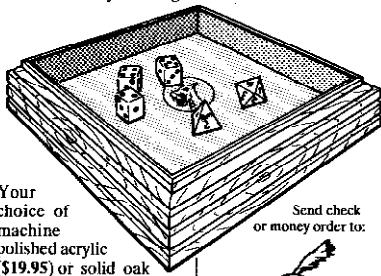
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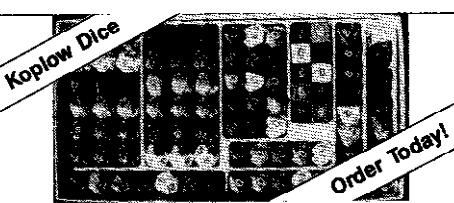
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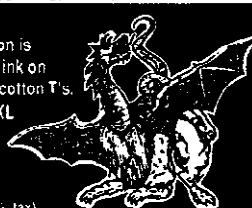
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KEEP THE HEROES FLYING

A super-hero campaign is built on more than combat

by Carleton Tsui

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game offers role-players the chance to experience the exciting and dramatic adventures featured in Marvel Comics. However, constructing and maintaining a campaign containing super heroes can be difficult despite having recognized characters and a detailed universe. Adventures designed by the Judge must be challenging, with ample opportunities for combat, yet contain continuing plot lines that captivate the participants. The last point is of greatest significance in a game where characters do not gain levels and, even after many adventures, may not be any more powerful than when they started. The scenarios that the Judge devises are the key factor in maintaining a high interest level. This article gives insights and some plot ideas that might help Judges establish campaigns in the mighty Marvel manner. Keep in mind that while references are made to the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, these points apply to any super-hero game.

Groups and goals

When assembling a super-hero group, the Judge should have in mind the type of campaign he wishes to develop. Consider the following questions:

1. Who are the heroes involved?
2. What do you know about the heroes' backgrounds?

3. What is the goal of the heroes' team?

These three questions establish the foundation on which you can logically build your scenarios.

The single most important aspect in any campaign is determining who its participants are. Players should role-play characters with whom they are familiar and comfortable. However, players should also be encouraged to use some less-recognized characters at times rather than always using the same old favorites. The best way to handle the selection of heroes is to compose a list of those heroes that you



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know and would like to see in your campaign. Judges are most content in building a campaign with characters they like, just as players are more enthusiastic when playing characters they like. Establish a medium in which both the players and Judge are content.

A crucial factor in the success of the campaign is your knowledge of the player characters' histories. Few know everything about the vast Marvel Universe, but it is a good idea to have at least a general knowledge about the main characters because this background allows you to develop creative subplots and spark new ideas. *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, recently published by Marvel, and the *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe* series from TSR, Inc. are invaluable for gaming purposes. Both publications give extensive histories of heroes and villains alike for those not fortunate enough to own every single issue of our favorite comics. The backgrounds of your PCs and nonplayer characters (NPCs) are a rich source of ideas and plots.

From defending the world to just being a nice guy, everyone has a reason for being a hero. Likewise, there should be a reason why super heroes do what they do or why they work together if they are not usually allies. Your campaign need not duplicate the existing Marvel Universe; anything you want to happen can happen. However, if your Marvel characters do not normally associate with each other and your players are Marvel fanatics, some type of explanation should be offered as to why these heroes have teamed up. Here are some heroic team goals commonly found in the Marvel Universe:

1. National or World Defense—The most common unifying force behind super-hero groups involves defense. Protecting the country, the Earth, the galaxy, or the universe is a never-ending struggle. This is the most open-ended goal, and virtually any type of adventure fits it. The Fantastic Four and the Avengers are big followers of this philosophy.

2. Responsibility of Power—Here, the heroes act in the belief that they have a responsibility to use their gifts for the benefit of the public. This approach is often part of the national/world defense ideal, but the heroes may not wish to be involved on such a large scale, working only locally. Daredevil and Spider-Man are the best examples here.

3. Quest—Adventures of this type of group involve reaching specific goals. While the welfare of the public is normally considered, the heroes are not in the business of protecting people. The plans of the X-Men and X-Factor to unite humanity

and mutants are examples of such quests. The most difficult aspect of using this goal in gaming is in devising a quest worthy of long-term play.

4. Revenge—Vigilante campaigns revolve around heroes attempting to avenge some form of harm done to them. The opposing force should be powerful and widespread to allow for maximum potential when designing adventures. The Punisher relies on the revenge theme.

5. Adventuring—Surprise: Adventurers have no purpose! The heroes live from adventure to adventure without specific plans. They may, at times, adopt one of the aforementioned goals, but nothing is permanent. Both Excalibur and She-Hulk seem to exist for the sake of seeking adventure itself.

The Judge's people

NPCs are essential for an interesting adventure and are among the most important elements in any campaign. Role-played well, NPCs provide the human contact that spells the difference between ordinary and exceptional games. Interaction with NPCs adds realism to the game and makes the players aware that the world and its events do not revolve around their PCs.

Through NPCs, Judges can not only have some fun in their own adventures, but can gain a degree of control in any party action. Fans of fantasy role-playing games in which killing is an accepted routine should be reminded of the different situation in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, in which NPC heroes can curb the PCs' murderous intentions against criminals by opposing them directly and reminding them of the rule of law. NPCs can also boost the strength of a heroes' team, assist novice players, or provide insight into critical clues with which the players are having difficulty.

When creating regularly used NPCs, have some of them be normal people. Since the world is mainly composed of everyday folks, it stands to reason that the bulk of NPCs will be normal men and women. Get the heroes involved with normal people and show them that the world is not just inhabited by super-powered beings. After all, super heroes are supposed to be a special minority.

However, because normal NPCs are "regular folks," they tend to be overlooked and forgotten in the masses of other super heroes and super villains that the PCs meet. Therefore, normal NPCs must be as memorable as possible. Give them different idiosyncrasies, personalities, situations, abilities, and disabilities. Perhaps one hero's best friend wears outrageous cloth-

ing or likes to sing in public. Peculiar habits are great attention getters, whether it's a new hair style every week or roller skates worn to work. Personalities are harder to pick up on than habits, unless they are obvious or the PCs have known the NPC for some time. Short tempers, radical mood changes, or the ability to laugh at every situation are easily observed. Even a person totally devoid of personality could be interesting! Strange situations really keep the NPC involved with the heroes. An NPC can become a hero's love interest. Maybe the NPC always needs money and finds the heroes generous. Even the landlord who constantly spies on the heroes' private activities can be memorable (if annoying). NPCs with exceptional talents and disabilities will also stick out in the player's mind. Players will remember the skilled doctor who saved their lives or the mathematics professor confined to a wheelchair.

It does not take much to build a memorable NPC. Just one or two memorable traits assigned to an NPC can make him interesting. Consider the Marvel characters Alicia Masters, J. Jonah Jameson, Willy Lumpkin, and Aunt May. Each of these normal characters is memorable because each has a special trait connected to them. Alicia is a blind sculptress, J. Jonah Jameson has a horrible temper, Willy Lumpkin is a kindly old mailman, and Aunt May is a lovable burden to her nephew. Well-developed and well-played NPCs are in the core of any ongoing campaign. In fact, adventures centered on people rather than outside events offer a break from slugfests with villains and the unravelling of global conspiracies.

Perplexing plots

It is common for adventures and conflicts to center on the PCs. After all, they are the PCs, and if events did not center on them, why bother playing? However, NPCs have lives, too, and sometimes it helps to construct a problem that centers on an NPC instead. Mystery, suspense, and suspicion build when all the information needed to solve a case involving an NPC is not given all at once. Consider the following example:

In a battle with a vampire, an NPC hero (or just a regular NPC) is bitten and, unknown to anyone else, begins a deadly transformation into a vampire. In successive games, clues are given to indicate the onset of vampirism. Since she is an NPC, the Judge can decide when and how to reveal this information to the players. By dropping small clues between other adventures, this subplot can maintain a degree of mystery for several sessions to

come. Suppose the NPC realizes what is happening, but she decides to conceal the fact from the PCs. Perhaps she stubbornly insists that nothing is wrong if confronted with evidence against her. After several games and numerous Psyche FEATs, she finally succumbs to the urge to draw blood—and what better targets than the bothersome PC heroes!

This is much more exciting than just telling a PC hero that he has become a vampire. Not only would the other players hear you say this (passing notes always draws suspicion anyway), but the effect would be less than startling. While it is stressed that the PCs are still number one, keep this NPC option open and tease players with bits and pieces of upcoming events. Plots like these are another reason why a good set of NPCs is valuable.

What follows is a number of events that can be used as plots or subplots. Some are easily incorporated into most campaigns, while others require some brainstorming on the Judge's part. All have been successfully used by this author, and the ideas expressed about each topic may serve as inspiration.

Romance: For those who enjoy role-playing, this field provides splendid opportunities for interaction. It is an entertaining and challenging topic to handle, but it requires maturity from the Judge and players for full effect.

If romance is an angle that you wish to include in your campaign, examine the backgrounds of the heroes who might be its objects. If a hero is a known Marvel character, he might already be romantically involved with another person or even married. But what if the character is not noted as having any romantic companions? The Judge can perform the match-making with an NPC or (with another player's consent) another PC hero, although in the latter case this will usually happen on its own. In the case of establishing an NPC partner, the Judge should consider the hero's popularity, personality, physical appearance, and actions. Most normal people would jump at the chance to be involved with a super hero, but some heroes might have a different view ("I don't need you! I'm the Phoenix!").

NPCs would be attracted to PC heroes for numerous reasons: short-term infatuation, the lure of fame (even to be shown in the tabloids), a set-up by the hero's arch-enemy (with the NPC as the bait), or even true love. In any event, keep the NPC active and involved in the PC's life just as if it were a real relationship. If the player refuses the NPC's advances, the NPC could leave, get angry, or keep trying to win the PC's affections. The lover may even go to

great extents to harm or attract the PC, depending on how deep the feelings run.

As long as the lover maintains a relationship with a hero, watch the hero's actions toward that person carefully. PCs are expected to spend time with their loved ones and remember things like birthdays and Christmas. Heroes who are married and have children have even more to handle. Neglected commitments and lost affection may result in arguments, a break-up, or even a divorce. Karma can be gained or lost easily when dealing with personal relationships. This plot can become very complex, but it can be highly rewarding and provide great enjoyment.

Death: Having just touched on what may be the happiest times for the hero, we now focus on a very dismal fact of life: death. In every role-playing game there exists the possibility of a PC dying. Sooner or later it catches up to all heroes [see "Nobody Lasts Forever," in DRAGON® issue #150]. In the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, though, it seems that death is generally not a problem. With vast supplies of Karma and high Endurances, heroes can stave off death almost indefinitely. Some

heroes are even immortal and cannot die! Due to enhancements in the Advanced game set, PCs are even allowed a FEAT roll against Kill shots. A little Karma on this roll virtually guarantees safety.

The Marvel game is a wonderful game of action and astounding feats against seemingly unbeatable odds. However, without the threat of death, players receive the impression that the Judge will always save their PCs, and the challenge of combat fades. Death provides a sharp sense of excitement that may otherwise be forgotten after many adventures.

To remedy this situation, incorporate the rule that a Kill shot means an instant loss of all Health points (such as in the original MARVEL SUPER HEROES set) and the hero begins losing Endurance ranks. All methods of stopping or slowing Endurance losses are applicable. Do not allow an Endurance FEAT vs. the kill shot! Since few heroes can afford 50 Karma points per round to stabilize their Endurances or 200 Karma points for new Endurance FEATs, caution in combat and having a friend's aid are still the best solutions.

On occasion, you may wish to include



the death of an NPC in the campaign. It should be someone whom the heroes have known and perhaps liked or loved; the NPC might even have been a fellow hero. It might even happen that a PC hero is slain, though this should not be purposefully planned for by the Judge. The death of a comrade in a tightly bound group such as those in the comics is usually met with considerable grief, offering extensive opportunities for role-playing. It is a shame that most Judges view death as nothing more than a chance to roll up new characters. Handled tastefully with players who enjoy role-playing with sentimental details, this can be a powerful addition to the campaign.

Battling other heroes: The confrontation between two known groups of heroes is a theme that has been frequently used in comics. The only thing that exceeds a phenomenal hero-versus-villain battle is a hero-versus-hero confrontation. Its very nature is fascinating. What would prompt acknowledged super heroes (and good friends, in most cases) to resort to using violence against each other?

This plot is difficult to construct. Again, background material on the heroes involved provides hints for constructing such battles. A logical explanation for the cause of such a fight is essential, as your players might demand to know why the heroes are fighting their allies! Perhaps the most frequently employed rationale here is mind control. Villains with mind-control powers are fairly common. They take great pleasure in having super heroes slug it out with one another, perhaps eliminating some of them. The advantage of mind control is that the controlled heroes are the real thing, not robots made up like the heroes, and the free-willed heroes are at a disadvantage in stopping their attackers without severely injuring them. Mind control is a viable, if somewhat unimaginative, solution.

Another rationale for hero-versus-hero battles is the use of robot duplicates or shape-changing imitators. These scoundrels usually imitate other beings only for combat purposes and for the confusion generated when they, as "good guys," attack the heroes. Some of the more devious imitators might infiltrate the team itself to steal secrets, defeat the headquarters' security, break up the team by causing personal problems, or spy on their actions. But only the finest imitators will not be caught off guard when confronted by bits of information only known to personal friends of the imitated-being.

The ideal hero-versus-hero battle is a genuine one, an unavoidable situation in which one team resorts to violence to solve a problem with another team. Laying out the plot and motivations involved takes a lot of work. For example, the PCs in the role of X-Factor might end up fighting the, X-Men (NPCs controlled by, the Judge) because each believes they are doing the

right thing for a certain mutant girl that each team is trying to rescue. X-Factor believes the girl should be trained to use her powers but then returned to society, while the X-Men want to train her as a potential adventurer. Suppose X-Factor decides that the girl is too young to face the dangers of heroism, while the X-Men believes that she would be perfectly safe. Neither side will budge, and when the joint rescue operation is completed, the real action begins.

In this example, conflict results from opposing goals. Fights resulting from clashing morals or plans at cross purposes are some of the most fascinating and sensational of all battles. The scenario is also thought provoking. Are the heroes doing the right thing? Perhaps their rivals are correct!

Financial disasters: This plot works best with heroes who have Excellent or better Resources or are involved in a business. A plot such as this does not have the same effect when resources are Poor to begin with. As the heading suggests, this plot involves a major loss of money. This could come about for several reasons, including lawsuits, blackmail, trickery, bad investments, debt, gambling, addiction to alcohol or drugs, competition by rival companies, or plain old theft.

Loss of money on a grand scale can be quite devastating. Tony Stark was an excellent example here, having suffered a continuing chain of problems arising from a financial disaster. He was cheated out of his multimillion-dollar company and contracts. As a result, he lost almost all his armor, which led to his drinking problem. It forced him out of the hero business and cost him the respect of many people.

Lawsuits and rival companies can be anything from annoying to downright dangerous. The former can potentially drain millions of dollars and are particularly useful against property-negligent heroes. And one should be especially careful when rivalling big businesses; unscrupulous businessmen have a habit of sending but hired muscle to see that the competition is crippled or eliminated completely. Super villains may become involved after normal methods of pushing out the heroes have failed. Friends and family could be kidnapped, held for ransom, or killed to ensure the bankruptcy of the PCs' company. PCs may also resort to violence or threats, but if they're caught in the act, they may be blackmailed into submission in return for not handing over incriminating evidence to the law or pressing charges. The corporations of the comic-book world are filled with corruption. Make use of them.

Addiction to chemical substances or to gambling can also put the hero in serious debt. Any supplier to an addicted hero is bound to have some tough muscle in his own organization which would be readily used against the hero, should he not be

able to come up with the money. It may be difficult to get a player to have his hero become addicted to drugs or abuse alcohol, for very obvious reasons. However, perhaps an NPC friend of a PC hero has such a problem, and steals from the hero or calls on the hero when in trouble.

If you feel that chemical addictions are distasteful to you or to your players, you can utilize less graphic but still expensive habits. A hero might be a rabid computer-game freak, aggressive art collector, or compulsive shopper. Tony Stark used to buy sports cars at the rate of about one per week.

The bottom line is that everyone needs money, even super heroes. A financial disaster should never occur more than once per campaign, as it take considerable time for heroes to recuperate from it. After plunging into the depths of poverty, give the PCs a break. Any plot can be overused.

Lifesavers: In this scenario, the team is involved in a quest to find some type of antidote or some much-needed information. The success of this plot depends on the originality of the problem and solution.

Generally, the plot runs something like this: A member of the team becomes severely ill, irradiated, transformed, comatose, etc. The PCs must detect, analyze, and formulate a solution to the problem. Most of the time the solution requires the building of a special apparatus or the obtaining of a rare herb, medicine, radioactive material, chemical, or magical talisman. It may be that the device to be constructed is simply extremely expensive. A classic example of the life-saving plot is the Fantastic Four's journey into the Negative Zone to steal the cosmic control rod from Annihilus. The rod's power was then used to save the life of the Invisible Girl, just before she gave birth to her son.

Certainly not all life-saving plots are on such a cosmic level, and a few twists to the standard plot can give it a new perspective. Suppose that in order to save the hero's life, another hero must give up his. But who would do it? Another team member? A fanatical fan of the hero? Someone who loves him? Maybe the hero will opt not to be saved, knowing that he has led a full life and wishing others to do the same. If a PC is the one who is dying, make sure that the player understands that such a voluntary death is final; otherwise the significance and impact of the problem is weakened.

Another problem that might appear concerns the side effects of the cure. Suppose that a cure robs the hero of his powers in part or in whole? Or maybe the cure requires the powers of another hero—but after the cure is applied, the donating hero loses his powers! What if the donating hero was not told of this

LANKHMAR



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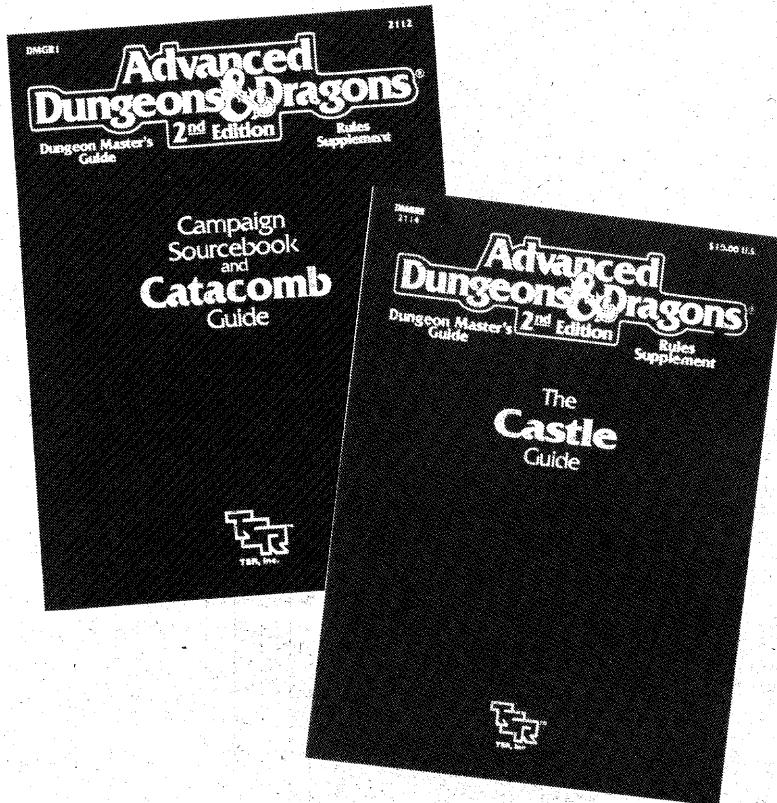
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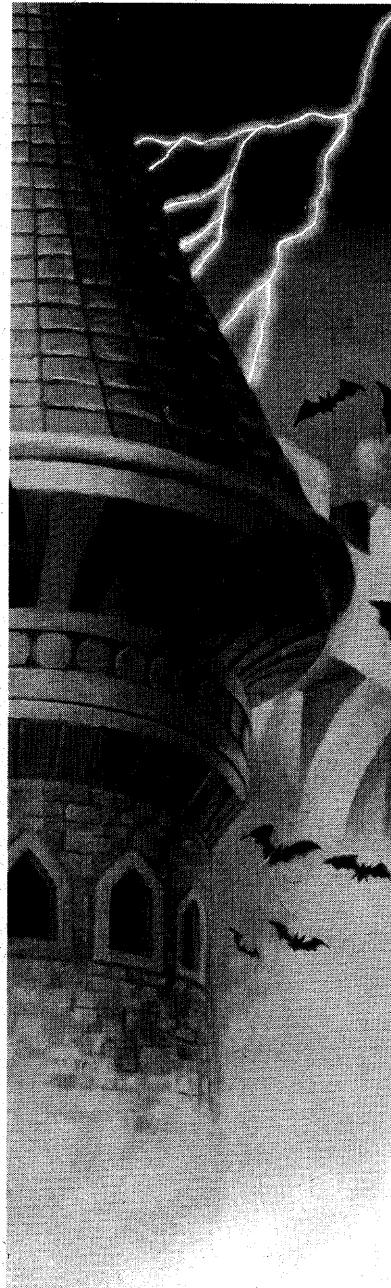


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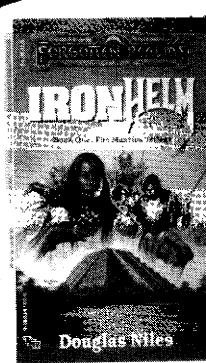
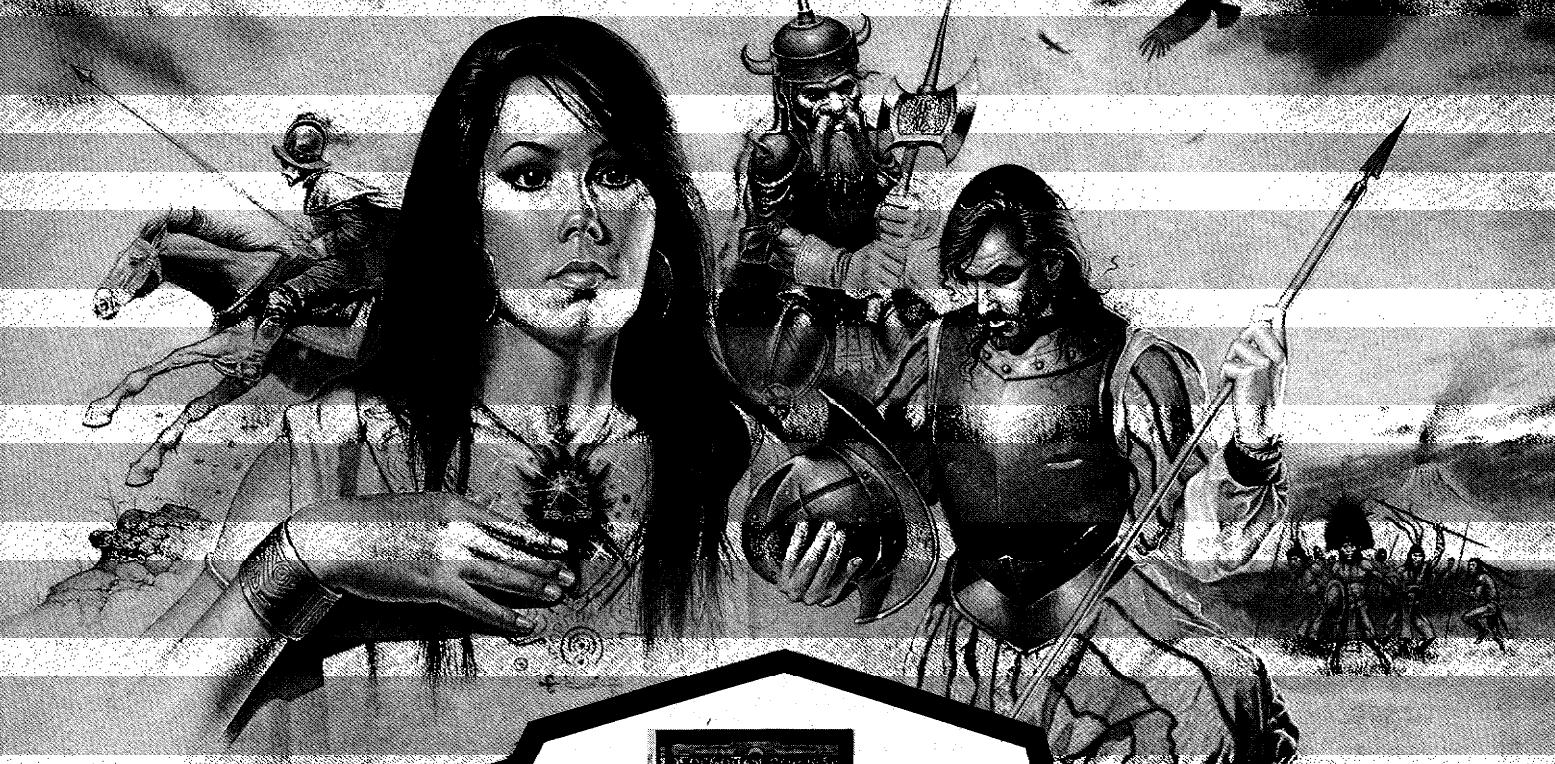
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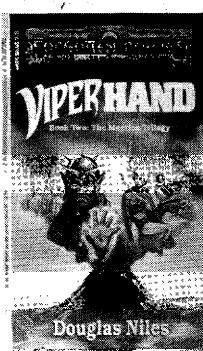
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consequence beforehand? What if the cure requires the aid of a super villain? No doubt in the former case there would be some type of confrontation between friends of the donating hero and the recipient (a darn good reason for a hero-versus-hero battle). In the latter case, some interesting propositions would have to be made to get a super villain to aid a foe, especially if a sworn arch-enemy must be called upon.

However, the healing process might have beneficial side effects, too. Some of the people involved in the process might acquire new powers or have their original powers enhanced. The healer and the patient might, in some processes, be merged into one being, with both consciousnesses intact. Future work may have to be done if such a merging proves dangerous or aggravating. As you can see, the aftermath can be just as interesting (if not more so) as the initial problem.

Loss of powers: What is it that separates a super hero from everyone else? His powers, of course. The previous scenario has already illustrated that powers can be lost. This plot often fits well with the life-saving line, as nothing inspires a hero to find a cure faster than when his own powers are on the line.

What happens to the hero once he loses his powers? The answer can only be supplied by the PC and depends on whether the powers can ever be regained. In most cases, the PC is retired and a new hero is generated if the power loss is permanent. Playing a character with no powers on a team that must constantly defend the safety of the planet is tough, to say the least. Should the hero remain true to his cause despite his handicap, there may be no need to quit. Permanently depowered characters can concentrate on gaining additional talents and raising their ability scores. Storm, of the X-Men, is such an example. When she realized that she would never command the elements again, she trained hard and in the long run even became the X-Men's leader. Judges who encounter a player so dedicated to his hero that he will play him even without powers should encourage his actions. Everyone loves a good comeback story. Perhaps the new and improved hero will be even better, having dealt with his "disability," and will triumph in the end.

The complete opposite of this scenario would be the massive gaining of power. Here, the hero finds his powers increasing to unimaginable levels. Soon, however, it could become an uncontrollable curse as the slightest release of energy might devastate vast areas of land or threaten to consume the hero. Or the power could taint the PC's righteousness, creating a "Dark Phoenix" effect. Strict limitations should be placed on the hero in order to preserve game balance should the Judge opt for a permanent increase of power to godlike levels.

The most important aspect about dealing with the loss of power is to treat it as a serious event. The effects can be temporary, but the players do not have to know that! Players tend to scoff and not be concerned if they can be sure that their heroes' precious powers will return to them. Used sparingly and effectively, the loss of powers can be one of the most challenging adventures for the players.

Group break-ups: Another good role-playing plot is the dissolution of the heroes' team. Incidents that could split up a heroes' team are many. Background material may indicate some sort of conflict between members that could be an underlying cause. Usually, a group breakdown is the result of personal conflicts (although the players themselves might split up for unrelated reasons, forcing changes in hero-group rosters).

A change of goals and outlook on life by one of the members could cause him to now oppose the goals or general alignment of the team. A serious traumatic experience, such as the slaying of a fellow member or friend, could psychologically injure a heroic character to the point of resignation. This hero may find her performance dropping because of grief or the fear of death, and other team members may soon request that she at least take a vacation.

It could be that a lover persuades the hero to quit because the lover cannot tolerate knowing that the hero lives in constant danger. If the hero refuses, the lover may leave, keep pleading, or even hire villains to beat up the hero to prove the point! Two members of the team may decide to get married, and one or both of them may not wish to pursue the adventuring life any further.

Villains desire nothing more than to see the good guys out of business. Enemies may seek to destroy the trust and companionship bonding the team. This can be attempted by mental or emotional control. Characters who are controlled may be consumed with fear, hate, doubt, or jealousy, and teammates may become approved by the controlled character's actions. Villains may frame heroes for staged crimes, especially the killing of

innocents or massive destruction. The team may then be wanted by the law and forced to disband, abandoning any public headquarters until the heroes can be cleared. Instead of breaking up, the group might go underground.

A situation in which only one or two members leave would provide a smooth entry for any new heroes that the Judge wishes to join the team. Just make sure that an explanation for disbanding a team or losing team members is reasonable. A super hero would not just give up after one or two failures, but only if some major disaster in his life caused him to believe that the group or world would be better off without him.

Aftermath

This article has highlighted some of the more popular plots found in comic books, but it has by no means even scratched the surface of the infinite variety of scenarios available. These plots have generally avoided combat, as it takes more than just a good fight to make a campaign; it is assumed that all Judges can design a decent combat situation.

Few players might consider having their heroes quit or get romantically involved, except for the most skilled role-players. Because your average player, especially a novice, will not involve himself in such situations, it is advisable to keep a cast of NPCs to help out. NPCs are extremely useful in promoting player initiative. Encourage players to take their own course of action, too, instead of merely waiting for the latest world domination plan to crop up.

Remember, with great power comes great responsibility, and no one has more power or responsibility than the game master.



Through the Looking Glass

Questions and reviews on dragons and biplanes

©1990 by Robert Bigelow

This month's column offers a rather wide menu. I first want to answer some of the questions that I've received most frequently. After that, we will retire to a short set of reviews.

To start, I want to print a quick retraction. In DRAGON® issue #151, I made mention of the dwarven "Bugman's Rangers" set from Games Workshop, and I received numerous comments about my statement that the Rangers were made of plastic. You are right—they are made of metal and I definitely know better. I was thinking about the plastic dwarven miniatures available in a large set from Games Workshop and had decided not to list them because they had no command elements. Even though the mind said "metal," the hand wrote "plastic," and I missed it when I reviewed the article for corrections. I do recommend Bugman's Rangers to people who can find them. This set is good even if the figures are bulkier than figures made in the U.S. With the Bugman's set and two of Grenadier's Dwarf Battlesets, you will have a formidable dwarven army for use with either the BATTLESYSTEM™ game from TSR, CHAOS WARS™ rules from Ral Partha, or Games Workshop's WARHAMMER™ FANTASY BATTLE.

The questions

Why don't you name specific stores or places where you can buy these miniatures? Why just list the companies, many of whom don't do direct mail?

When a product is reviewed, the manu-

facturer is noted so that there is no favoritism shown to any one retail store. Try the hobby shop closest to you, and if it doesn't carry the item, ask the store to order it. If the store personnel don't know where to get the product or have no one to get it from, they can check their copy of *Model Retailer* magazine. If they still don't get the product in, then write to the company listed. Frequently these companies have lists of stores that carry their products or can refer you to someone who has such lists. Often these places can deal with you directly.

Why hasn't [a certain miniatures product] been reviewed?

As a general rule, only figures submitted for review by the manufacturers can be reviewed. Miniatures submitted by readers sometimes have defects, and the hobby shops that sold the figures won't refund the money for them, so the submitters want to warn other people. This is good, providing that all the miniatures produced of that type have the same flaws—but they usually don't. Some samples are figures that are impossible to purchase or find, or are currently out of production. Reviews on these figures won't help the business at large and will only upset people when they cannot find out-of-date figures. All miniatures submitted for review should be sent to: Miniatures reviews, DRAGON Magazine, P.O. 111 (201 Sheridan Springs Road), Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

Where can I get miniatures to go with my game? Who makes these figures?

This is one of the most frequently asked

questions that appears in my mail box. In order to give you the best possible list, I turned the project over to Keith Piske, one of my assistants at previous GEN CON® game fairs. Keith has large armies in both 25mm and 15mm and uses rules that span the range from TSR's CHAINMAIL system to Games Workshop's WARHAMMER FANTASY BATTLE. Keith did a good job of putting together the figure list that follows.

A monstrous compendium

Anyone who has played a fantasy role-playing game can tell you that exciting and dangerous opponents make up some of the best encounters. Of course, they can pose problems for the GM. Does he just tell the players what each creature is or only describe its appearance? If the GM or one of the players has a bent toward painting miniatures, this can be solved. However, you can't always find the correct figure for every creature. Who makes a stirge miniature?

Several companies now produce fine miniatures for fantasy games. I have not listed every possible figure for each creature from each company, nor is every creature type listed; I'm just not up to that kind of exacting research. Where possible, I have listed more than one company as well as all the relevant product numbers (when I could find them). These product numbers might eventually be changed, so check with the appropriate company.

First is the list for single figures, followed by a short list of miniatures for wargaming units.

Manufacturer key	
CIT	Citadel
GR	Grenadier
FCN	Folklore Creatures of the Night
Manu	Monster Manuscript set
Myth	Monsters of Mythology set
MM	Marauder Miniatures
LL	Lance and Laser
RAFM	RAFM
RP	Ral Partha
Aerialservant	
Basilisk	RPWF2
Bear	GR1501(ManuV1
Beholder	RP 01040
Bugbear	RP11401;GR104
Centaur	GR 115
Centipede	RP01047,02097,02098,02903
Chimera	RAFM 3609
Couatl	RP01007,11402;GR1502(ManuV2)
Demon	RP01051,02096,02408,02954,10212,10412,31017;GR6006,102,113,510;RAFM3703
Devil	GR 897
Displacer beast	RP 11413
Dog	RP 02911
Dragon	RP 01068,01072,01083,01094,01129,01138,01139,01140,01146,01314,10210,10211,02041,01941,02955,10416,10500;GRX01-2524,6001,9601-9612
Dwarf	RP 01601,01323,02031-02036,01038,01039,02235,02239,FA15,FA29,FA40,GR2022,1603,9003,021,046;CIT0301-0312

Elemental LL003,004
 Elephant.....RAFMAH19,AH20
 Elf RP02020-02020,02201
 02210,02214,02219,FA14;RAFM3070-3076;
 CIT 0401-0406; 0401-0406;MM 80/1-80/6
 Elf,dark RP01339,02021-02025;
 MMDE1-DE30
 Genie.....RP01069
 Ghost.....RP31003
 Ghoul.....RP31004
 Giant.....RP01052-01057,01059,
 01109,02414,02902,02934,11403,11407;GR
 175,3501-3510,514
 Gnoll.....RP01058,02059,02929,02939
 Gnome RP01334,02922,FA34
 Goblin RP02050;GR108,1604,022
 Golem.....GR116
 Griffin.....RP01051,01135
 Halfling.....RP02029,02227,02028
 Harpy.....GR1504(ManuV4)
 Hippogriff.....RP01029;GR138
 Hobgoblin.....RP02957;GR151
 Hydra.....RP02901,10-417;GR124
 Kobold GR148
 Lich.....RP01405
 Lion.....RP02910
 Lizardman.....RP02920,31023
 Mantidore.....RP02908
 Medusa.....RP31008
 Mindflayer.....RP11406
 Minotaur RP02936,02956,31005;
 RAFM3616
 Mummy.....RP31009
 Ogre.....RP02943,31018;
 GR141;CIT0902
 Ogremage.....RP11405;GR1507(ManuV7)
 Orc.....RP01141,01160,01609,
 02062,02065,02070,02072-02074,02077-
 02079,02275,02278,12010,11409;GR20,109,
 156,166,1602,9002
 Owlbear.....RP11411;GR1507(ManuV7)
 Pegasus.....RP01017,01937;GR160
 Rakshasa GR1509(ManuV9),6004(Myth)
 Rat,giant.....RP02912
 Satyr.....GR1509(ManuV9),6004(Myth)
 Scorpion.....GR118
 Skeleton RP02040-02046,02402,
 02938,RP12030,36101-36104;CITSkeleton
 Army;GR6002,106,107,130,131,137,162,
 508,509,26,27
 Skeleton,giant.....RP02940;GR5504
 Skeleton,mounted GR165;RP02141
 Spectre GR2014(FCN)
 Treant GR171
 Troll.....RP11408;GR706;MMTR1.TR6
 Umberhulk.....RP02409,11404;GR135
 Unicorn.....RP02909,01071;GR1510ManuV10)
 Vampire GR2014(FCN)
 Wight.....GR2014(FCN)
 Wolfriders.....RP02093,02094;GR910-912,
 9004;RAFM3201-3219
 Wraith.....RP01050,02928;GR172
 Yeti.....GR52
 Zombie.....RP31007;GR2014(FCN)

Army figure sets

Of course, one can use any figure in a war game. These are just the ones packaged as units of figures:

Elves.....RP02002-02019;GR6003;
 CIT0401-0406;MM80/1-80/6
 Darkelves RP02021-02025;MM70DEseries
 Dwarves.....RP02031-02039;GR1603,
 2202,9003;CIT0301-0311
 Goblins RP02050;GR1604
 Humans.....RPHistorical;GR6005,1601;
 CIT0101-0110(ChaosWarriors0201-0204,
 0210-0213,0216-0218);RP12000
 Orcs RP02062-02079,11409,12010;
 GR9002,1602,2011;CIT0501-0512
 Treants GR171
 Wolfriders.....RP02093,02094;GR9004



Stone Giant and Fire Giant (Ral Partha)
with Orge mage (Grenadier)



Umber Hulk (Ral Partha), with
Rakshasa and Owlbear (Grenadier)



Beholder (Ral Partha), with
Couatl and Unicorn (Grenadier)



Corporate Sector (Grenadier)

In addition, Citadel has a boxed set called WARHAMMER Fantasy Regiments, an army set of styrene plastic with 10 figures each of elves, dwarves, orcs, goblins, dark elves, and skaven (ratmen).

As with any purchase, you should, if at all possible, take a look at the figures before buying them. This will give you some idea as to the style, size, and quality of the miniatures.

Of course, inclusion in or exclusion from this article does not imply any endorsement of a miniature by TSR, Inc., DRAGON Magazine, or this humble author. And there are bound to be a few mistakes in this listing. I apologize for this and for the shortness of the lists. Happy gaming!

Reviews

Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

Game Designers' Workshop

P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington IL 61702-1646

The BLUE MAX game (stock #0421)

The European skies of World War I marked the end of the code of chivalry known in modern combat. While troops fought in the trenches below, the skies were filled with modern knights whose steeds were made of fabric and wood. Their fights were often one on one, each pilot jockeying for position in the sky. However, unlike "modern" aerial combat of World War II and later, the pilots often expressed courtesy and honor to their foes. Many pilots braved enemy fire to bring news of fallen pilots to the enemy, or landed in barren fields to claim the remains of a friend. Pilots who fired on other pilots after they had left their aircraft were frequently shunned. It was not until almost the very end of World War I that this changed.

The BLUE MAX game from GDW allows you to recreate this period realistically and easily. The boxed set comes with rules, a book of aircraft record sheets, an aircraft maneuver schedule, a large hex map, and counters. Go through the instructions with the aircraft maneuver schedule in hand

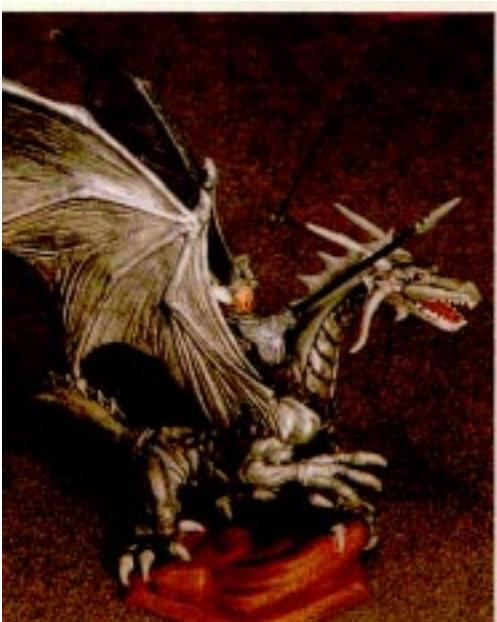
and play out a short scenario to help you learn the rules. Players can usually pick up the instructions and be able to play against veterans in less than half an hour.

Before you start playing, though, I recommend that you make several copies of the combat chart on the back of the aircraft maneuver schedule and have them laminated. In addition, I recommend that you keep at least two of the aircraft record sheets blank as masters and make multiple copies of these sheets as well as the charts and maneuver sheets in the maneuver schedule. This will allow you to play the game with greater speed, as everyone will have his own set of tables instead of waiting for someone to finish before he can start. The aircraft record sheets allow you to record moves and give you an easy way to register damage in a box-type setup that represents the different areas of each plane and how much damage these areas can receive. As damage is taken, you black out appropriate boxes until the aircraft crashes. The maneuver book also gives a list of speeds and maneuvers of which your aircraft is capable. These maneuvers are used with the big hex map to fight your opponent.

While this game was designed as a board game, it has been used as a guiding set of rules for World War I aircraft combat with miniatures. The maneuvers on the cards are closely matched with each aircraft's capabilities, giving realistic results and, as often as not, leaving the potential for victory to the best pilot rather than to the best plane. With the addition of altitude factors in the rules, this game comes to three-dimensional life. There are many ways of producing this effect for use with miniatures. The easiest way is to buy a set of small or medium C-in-C aircraft stands, a piece of brass tubing 4" long with a diameter to fit into the aircraft stand base, and a 5" piece of solid wire just wide enough to fit in the tube snugly. Drill a series of holes each big enough to hold a straight pin at 1" lengths along the tube (use an unmechanized pin-vise drill for this—it's slower but much safer). Connect the tube to the stand with epoxy glue and let it dry. Then glue the aircraft to the solid wire (you may have to make a small hole in the miniature) and let that dry. Then place the wire inside the tube. Altitude can now be shown by raising the wire holding the aircraft to the proper height and preventing it from falling by using a straight pin through the holes in the tube at the appropriate height.

Special mention must be made of the counter sheet for the aircraft. The counters are beautifully done with accurate detail, making for either a colorful game or an excellent painting guide for models of aircraft of this period.

This is an excellent game, and I highly recommend it as an introduction to both board games and miniatures. My only complaint is that there are not enough



Huma's Silver Dragon (Ral Partha)

copies of the forms. My wish is that GDW would release an expansion set that includes balloons and the rest of the aircraft of this period. The price is \$24.

Grenadier Models Inc.

P.O. Box 305
Springfield PA 19064

Grenadier Models UK Ltd.

19 Babage Road
Deeside, Clwyd, Wales
United Kingdom CH5 2QB

9702—Corporate Sector

One of the fastest selling new games is FASA's SHADOWRUN™ system. This game was introduced at the 1989 GEN CON game fair and represents a time in the future when magic and the lost races return to the Earth. This dark-future game envisions a world dominated by corporations that are equivalent to small nations. The figure set that we are going to review represents the minions that keep these companies in power. They are the biggest threats to the anticompany heroes, or Shadowrunners.

The Corporate Sector set contains 10 metal 25mm figures with oval bases. The figures are a small cross section of corporate rate personnel with a heavy emphasis on security people of all races:

Dwarven Security Guard: This figure measures just over 22mm in height and is dressed in pants and a shirt. The shirt has frontal armor with overlapping plates covering the stomach and chest areas, extending to cover the majority of the back. Plating protects the shoulders and extends halfway down the arm, with elbows covered by pads and "flex" sleeves. The dwarf holds a cigar in his left hand with a blaster in his right. The pants are baggy coveralls with knee pads. The figure has bare feet. The gun and holster are connected to a belt with ammunition pouches. Facial features include a short beard, mustache, and a prominent nose. The guard has a stern look, and his hair is pulled back into a ponytail. Detail is good overall but shallow in many places, so be careful when painting.

Mr. Johnson: This is a typical corporate man with all the trimmings. The figure measures 27mm tall and is average in build. He is wearing a three-piece suit with a double-button vest and a tie. His shirt sleeves extend just past the edge of his suit coat, which has pockets and split tails. He is pointing with his left index finger, his face set in a neutral expression. His hair is combed back in the present "executive" look. The figure seems to be just a bit tall and care should be taken in painting.

The Company Man: This represents an individual who settles company problems. To this end, he wishes to remain anonymous. This figure is 25mm tall and wears a vest and pants that taper at the cuff, soft shoes, and a long trench coat of the type

worn in the late 19th century. He also wears a large slouch hat that covers most of his face except for the mouth, which has a frown. Also visible under the hat are the man's round glasses. The company man is holding two submachine guns, and his vest is armored-simple but effective.

Chromed Security Guard: This figure is 26.5 mm tall. His uniform is basically the same as the dwarf's, with the exception of electronic enhancements on both arms with cables leading into shoulder units. The figure is barefoot, and the facial detail is good, with distinct eye detail. His hair has fine detail that will probably disappear when painted. Both arms are extended outward.

Security Guard: A nice generic guard in the "at ease" position (hands behind back), this figure is 26mm tall and wears virtually the same uniform as the dwarf but with a full helmet with visor down, hiding his face.

Wage Mage: This young lady is wearing a blouse covered by a suit jacket and dress ensemble. The jacket is pulled together and held by a single button. The dress comes to about midthigh, leaving her legs bare down to her soft shoes. Her legs detract from the figure, as the right leg is only slightly detailed and the left looks swollen, with almost no knee, and does not taper. She wears a charm on a chain to fasten her long cloak, which goes almost to the base. The figure's right arm is raised as if casting a spell. Her facial features are good and carry a look of concentration.

The original figure that came with the set had a stump where her right hand should have been and facial features that looked like those of the comics villain Clayface. Grenadier was quick to replace the figure, and the new one is as described. If you find a figure that doesn't have the detail that it should, let the company know; sometimes this signals a temporary production problem, and if told about it, the company can remedy it.

Elven Security Guard: The elf has same armor as the rest of the security guards, with a prominent "widow's peak" hairline and the usual pointed ears. His facial expression is stern, with fair facial detail. He is making a "stop" gesture with his left hand. In his right hand, he holds a submachine gun/grenade launcher.

Security Guard with Pistol: This one is the same as the generic security guard, only with a drawn pistol. He is in the classic firing stance.

Troll Security Guard: This is a truly imposing figure, with almost twice the bulk of any other figure. He is wearing the same uniform as the other security guards, but his is slightly ragged. He has no sleeves, and his arms have large ropy muscles that look like they could topple small buildings. The troll is carrying a large weapon under his left arm and is pointing with his right. His messy hair appears to have two horns protruding

from it. His ears are large and pointed. If you look closely, you can see tusks in his mouth. The rest of the facial features have a sharpness to them that says, "I am not in a good mood." This is a well-done figure.

Ork Security Guard: The ork is dressed like the rest of the security guards. His facial features are definitely orkish. The large assault gun that he is carrying appears to be ready to fire.

These are excellent figures that could be used equally well with other postholocaust or space games as well as with the SHADOWRUN game. I highly recommend these figures, as they follow the sketches in the rule book almost exactly. The price is \$9.95 for the set.

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.

5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnati OH 45212

#10-503 Huma's Silver Dragon ****

In all the DRAGONLANCE® Heroes series, there is no braver tale than that of Huma and his silver dragon Gwyneth—and now the two are in miniature form. Once again, Ral Partha primes you for the figure with the use of vivid cover art on the box. When you open the box, you find 12 well-made parts nestled inside. After assembly, the body is just short of 8" long. The dragon's smooth skin shows a slickness of form, and detailed plates cover the muscles in her main body and neck. The dragon's face has a ferocious look, with her front right claw bent back in preparation for a claw sweep. The dragon sits atop a rock, and her wings jut up and back to a height of 3-4". The prominent eyes, the spine jutting straight up, and the four head-horns all reinforce the fierceness of this creature.

Huma sits astride the dragon's back in a simple saddle lashed on with two thick, crossed straps. He rides with his left fist in the air and a detailed dragonlance held in jousting position. His winged helm is well detailed, and with his faceplate up, you see the long droopy mustache and long hair characteristic of the Knights of Solamnia. Huma's cape flows behind with a bird-and-sword clasp binding it to his chest plate and mail shirt. His pants flow smoothly into his high leather boots.

But some of the thrill is taken out of this figure when you attempt to assemble it. This is one of the few Ral Partha multi-piece miniatures I have seen in which the pieces don't fit together tightly. The leg and wing assembly required a fair amount of body filler to properly match the body. And the tail required much more filing and filling than normal to fit into the body slots. The fit that we have come to expect is not there.

With time and effort, this can be a really terrific model. It is a fitting opponent for the red dragon of Krynn that we reviewed in DRAGON issue #143. I recommend this figure to experienced modelers. The cost is \$15.95.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,

6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention' Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

♦ indicates an Australian convention.

★ indicates a Canadian convention.

● indicates a European convention.

* Indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

Words of warning: Be aware that there are now at least four SF/fantasy/gaming conventions with very similar names: ICON, held in Iowa; I-CON, in Long Island, N.Y.; I-KHAN, in Colorado Springs, Colo.; and I-CON, in British Columbia. Confusion between them is probably inevitable. Plan carefully.

ONCE UPON A CON, May 25-27

The International Fantasy Gaming Society (IFGS) is hosting this event at the Holiday Inn Northglenn, just north of Denver, Colo. Guests of honor are Steven Brust and Mercedes Lackey; also attending are Simon Hawke, Mel White, and Larry Dixon. Live-action RPGs will be running all weekend, along with a weapons' tournament, seminars about the IFGS, a costume contest and dance, a dealers' room, an art show and auction, and tabletop gaming. Registration: \$23 at the door. Write to: ONCE UPON A CON, P.O. Box 3577, Boulder CO 80307-3577. The IFGS is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to running safe live-action RPGs, with chapters all across the U.S.A.

GAMESCAUCUS II, May 25-28

Sponsored by TriGaming Associates, this convention will be held at the Concord Hilton in Concord, Calif. This year's guest of honor is Dave Arneson, co-creator of the D&D® game. Special events include world-wide DIPLOMACY* and "Live" AWFUL GREEN THINGS* games, as well as AD&D®, D&D®, CHAMPIONS®, RUNE-QUEST®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, UPFRONT®, AXIS AND ALLIES®, ENEMY IN SIGHT®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, and other board and miniatures games. Registration: \$15 for the weekend before May 11, or \$20 at the door. Write to: Mike Wilson, P.O. Box 4867, Walnut Creek CA 94596-0867.

GAMEX '90, May 25-28

This will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt. Where all types of family, strategy and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will take place. Events include flea markets, auctions, an exhibitor area, seminars and demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3245.

SLANDRAK I, May 26

This convention will be held at the SBHS Gymnasium in San Bernadino, Calif. Sponsored by the SBHS Fantasy and SF Club—Slandrak, this convention will feature an AD&D® tournament a 3-D "monster bash," and a SPACE MARINE® tournament. Other activities include a miniatures contest, open gaming, and a flea market/exhibitor area. Write to: SLANDRAK GAME CON I, c/o David O'Brien, 25645 E. 27th St., San Bernadino CA 92404; or call: (714) 882-5137.

TWIN CON 1, May 26-27

This gaming extravaganza will be held at the Hilton in Bloomington/Minneapolis, Minn. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU*, and WARHAMMER* tournaments, with open gaming, and a gamers' breakfast. The guest of honor is Mark Acres. Write to: Louis Mengol, 3376 Upper 149th St. West, Rosemount MN 55068; or call: (612) 423-7368. Include an SASE with any mail inquiries.

SPRING FANTASY REVEL, June 1-3

Held at the College of Lake County campus in Greyslake, Ill., this convention will feature several RPGA™ events including AD&D® Feature, Masters, and Grand Masters games. Other activities include miniatures and strategy games, a movie room, an art show, a painting contest, demonstrations, panels, and a large dealers' area. Guests include James Ward, Jean Rabe, Skip Williams, and Frank and Penny Mentzer. Registration: \$12 at the door (ask about discounts). GMs and dealers are welcome! Write to: Keith Polster, 155 N. Milwaukee Ave., #101, Lake Villa IL 60046; or call Keith at: (708)356-4472.

DEEPSOUTHCON XXVIII, June 7-10

"XXVIII" will be held at the Quality Inn-East Ridge in Chattanooga, Tenn. Scheduled guests include Bob Shaw, Raymond Feist, Darrell K. Sweet, Forest Ackerman, and Bryan Webb. Registration: \$25. Write to: DEEPSOUTHCON, Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422; or call: (404) 578-8461 (no collect calls, please).

GLATHRICON '90, June 8-10

Sponsored by the Evansville Gaming Guild, this 7th annual convention will be held in Evansville, Ind. Steve Jackson will be the guest of honor. Skip Williams will be the DM guest of honor. Jean Rabe, the RPGA™ Network Coordinator, will represent the Network. The artist guest of honor will be Lucy Synk. RPGA™ tournaments include AD&D® Feature, Masters, Grandmasters and Joe Martin Benefit games, with GLIRPS*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Feature and Masters, JAMES BOND*, PARANOIA*, PARANOIA* Masters, CHILL*, DC HEROES*, CHAMPIONS*, and STAR TREK* games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a large art show and print shop, an art auction, a masquerade, a miniatures-painting contest, seminars, and panels. Registration: \$20. Write to: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716; or call: (812)477-9508.

ADVENTURERS INN, June 9-10

This gaming convention will be held in the Mother Load Fairground in Sonora, Calif. Fantasy gaming will be highlighted. Other activities include a large open gaming area, seminars, and SCA demonstrations. Registration: \$13/day or \$20 for the weekend at the door. Plus, a \$3 refund for anyone in a medieval/fantasy costume. Write to: ADVENTURERS INN, P.O. Box 576, Sonora CA 95370.

ARTYCON II, June 9-10

This convention will be held at the Community Activity Center, 3281 Sheridan Rd., Fort Sill OK. Events include AD&D® CALL OF CTHULHU*, CHAMPIONS®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, ROLEMASTER*, SHADOWRUN*, STAR TREK*, and STAR WARS® games, with a miniatures-painting contest and Japanimation. Registration: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door for both days, or \$4 for one day. Write to: ARTYCON II, ITR Office, 1721 Gruber Rd., Ft. Sill OK 73503.

SAGA '90, June 9-11

This year, SAGA is moving to Globe High School in Sydney, Australia. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, and other role-playing, board, miniatures, and freeform games. Write to: SAGA, P.O. Box 71, Kingsway, NSW, AUSTRALIA 2208

MADISON GAME DAY '90, June 10

This convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 3841 E. Washington Ave., in Madison, Wis. Events include role-playing, historical, miniatures, and board games. Registration: \$5, no game fees. Judges are welcome. Write to: MADISON GAME DAY, c/o Nick Klapper, 1909 Heath Ave., Madison WI 53704; or call (608) 249-3264.

NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL

June 15-17

The "Festival" will be held at the Bayou Plaza, in New Orleans, La. The guest of honor is Roger Zelazny, and the artist guest of honor is Dell Harris. Other guests include George R. R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, Greg Costikyan, Denny O'Neil, and many more. Other activities include programming, an art show and auction, a hospitality suite, a dance, a meet-the-guest party, movies and videos, a dealers' room, and a charity event for the Battered Womens' Center and the Chinchuba Institute. Registration: \$20 until June 1, or \$25 at the door. No preregistration after June 1. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089..

ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION II, June 16-17

This gaming convention will be held at the Central Penn Business School in Summerdale, Pa. Activities include a dealers' area, a miniatures-painting contest, videos, and over 60 role-playing, war, miniatures, science-fiction, and other games. The guest of honor is Tom Wham. Registration: \$4-6/day and \$8-12 for both days, depending on the date of registration. Membership is limited. Write to: M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

MICHICON GAMEFEST '90, June 22-24

This convention will be held in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, a suburb of Detroit, Mich. Events include 50 RPG, 60 board, and 60 miniatures games. Other activities include three used-games auctions, and open gaming. Registration: \$12 for the weekend, or \$7/day preregistered. Write to: Metro Detroit gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192; or call (days) Barry Jensen at: (313) 591-2300 ext. 325; or call (evenings) Mike Bartnikowski at (313) 928-7744.

POLYCON VIII, June 22-24

The Simulation and Adventure Gaming Assoc. of CalPoly is sponsoring "VIII." Events include stories and illustrations, movies, Liventures, speakers, games, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$22 for weekend passes or \$12 for one-day passes at the door (GMs have special prices). Write to: POLYCON VIII, c/o SAGA, Activities Planning Center, Box 168, San Luis Obispo CA 93401, and ask about special room rates; or call Stacey Fettters at: (805) 545-9858.

WORLD DIPCON '90, June 22-24

The 1990 International DIPLOMACY® Championships will be held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. The tournament will consist of four rounds of DIPLOMACY® games, with a DIPLOMACY® team competition

and tournaments in CIVILIZATION®, TITAN®, and RAILWAY RIVALS® games. The tournament winner will be named the 1990 International DIPLOMACY® Champion. Registration: \$20, with tournament housing for \$15/night double or \$30/night single. Write to: David Hood, 15-F Estes Park, Carrboro NC 27510.

DEMICON II, June 23-25

The Harford Adventure Society presents "II," to be held at the Holiday Inn-Aberdeen House, in Aberdeen, Md. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, PARANOIA®, CHAMPIONS®, SHADOWRUN®, CAR WARS®, and WARHAMMER 40,000® games. Registration: \$17.50 before May 31, or \$20 at the door. Write to: DEMICON II, c/o Harford Adventure Society, P.O. Box 1063, Aberdeen MD 21001.

ORIGINS/DRAGON CON '90, June 28-July 1

The 1990 National Gaming Exposition and Trade Show will be held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor are Tom Clancy and Doug Niles, with more guests to be announced. Role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer game tournaments will be held around the clock. Other activities include panels and workshops, game and consignment auctions, a masquerade, an art show and print shop, and video rooms! Write to: ORIGINS '90, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

IMAGINATION '90, June 30

This convention will be held at the Crawley College of Technology in Crawley, West Sussex, England. Events include AD&D®, BLOOD-BOWL®, STAR TREK®, and STAR WARS® games. Other activities include war games, miniatures, board games, and films. Registration: £ 3 until June 29; £ 3.50 thereafter. £ 1 discount for children under 14. Write to: Graham Todd, 36 Deerswood Rd., West Green, Crawley, West Sussex, UNITED KINGDOM RH11 7JN. Include an SASE.

ECONOMYCON III, July 6-8

This convention will be held at Alma School in Mesa, Ariz. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, BATTLE FOR MOSCOW®, CIVILIZATION®, and SUPREMACY® games, with open gaming, Japanimation, World War II micro-armor, and the LOST WORLDS® fantasy-book game. Write to: ECONOMYCON, 2740 S. Alma School, Mesa AZ 85202.

ATLANTICON '90, July 13-15

This convention will be held at the Baltimore Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel and the Baltimore Convention Center. Activities include gaming and free game demonstrations, game auctions, a flea market, 24-hour open gaming areas, and discount coupons for all preregistrants. Registration: \$14 for the weekend prepaid, or \$18 at the door. One-day passes will also be available at the door. Write to: ATLANTICON, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220; or call: (301)574-5066.

COSCON '90, July 13-15

Sponsored by the Circle of Swords, this gaming convention will be held at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pa. Events include first-run RPGATM tournaments and events, board games, a dealers' area, a flea market, and a miniatures-painting contest. On-site housing is available. Registration: \$10 until June 30, or \$15 thereafter. Write to: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler PA 16003; or call Dave Schnur at: (412) 283-1159.

QUIN CON V, July 13-15

This three-day event will offer RPGs, fantasy and historical miniatures, board and card games, and RPGATM events. A special tournament for the Hemophilia Fund will also take place. The guest of honor will be game and module designer, Lester Smith. This event will be held at the Roadway Inn in Quincy, Ill. Ask about special rates for convention attendees. Registration: \$5/day or \$12 for the weekend, preregistered. Write to: QUIN CON V 3632 Maine St., Quincy IL 62301 (include an SASE); or call (217) 223-8498.

DOVERCON VI, July 14-15

It will be held this year at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, NH. Activities include an RPGATM AD&D® tournament and many other gaming events, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Registration: \$15 at the door, or \$10 for one day. Dealers and judges are welcome. Write to: DOVERCON VI, P.O. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

CASTLECON III, July 20-22

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Bethesda, in Bethesda, Md. Events include SF, fantasy, gaming, music, costumes, computers, science, and friendship. Registration: \$18 until June 30; \$25 at the door. Write to: FanTek, 1607 Thomas Rd., Fort Washington MD 20744.

CHIMERA, July 20-22

This convention will be held in the Hyatt Regency Woodfield in Schaumburg, Ill. Guests of honor are Connie Willis, Howard Waldrop, and Gardner Dozois. Other guests include Richard Knaak, Fred Pohl, Barbara G. Young, and many more. Numerous seminars are all designed to make the reader of SF more than just a consumer. Registration: \$40, children's rate is \$30 with babysitting if you register before June 1. Write to: CHIMERA, 1016 Columbian, Oak Park IL 60302.

I-KHAN, July 20-22

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn North in Colorado Springs, Colo. Special guest of honor will be Andrew J. Offutt. Tournaments include AD&D®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, CAR WARS®, SKY GALLEONS OF MARS®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include open gaming, a movie room, a pre-1960s movie theme costume contest, a dealers' room, a miniatures-painting contest, and our own version of *Highlander*. Registration: \$10 before June 20; \$15 thereafter, plus a \$1 fee per event. Write to: Miniatures Wargamers Guild, 2354 S. Academy Blvd., Colorado Springs CO 80916; or call Perry Rogers at (719) 392-2656.

CONJUNCTION, July 27-29

This convention will take place at New Hall College, Cambridge, England. The guest of honor will be Gregory Stafford. Events include no game tournaments, but there will be panels, a masquerade, films, and a dealers' area. There will also be combat demonstrations, live-action role-playing, PBMs, workshops, and a real ale bar. Membership is £ 12 for those over 18. Write to: CONJUNCTION, 27 Terront Road, London N15 3AA, UNITED KINGDOM; or call John Dallman at: 01-802-8723.

TSR PREVIEWS

NOTE: The dates in this column have been changed to reflect the on-sale (not shipping) dates for these products. On-sale dates will be used from now on.

NEW PRODUCTS FOR MAY

DMGR2 *The Castle Guide* AD&D® 2nd Edition reference supplement

by Lots O'People

The days of knights in shining armor and towering stone castles come alive in the second volume of the DMGR series. This volume includes a castle-design system and an expansion to the BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures rules.

Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00/£9.95
Product No.: 2114

FRA1 *Storm Riders*

AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™ module
by Troy Denning

Storm Riders is the first installment of the Empires Adventures trilogy set in the lands of *The Horde*, the upcoming boxed set (due in September) that describes the lands between Kara-Tur and the rest of the Realms. In this adventure, the PCs must flee an army of Mongol-like nomads but find themselves astray in the secretive, wonderful land of Ra-Khati!

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.96/£5.95
Product No.: 9281

AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium, Volume Five*

AD&D® 2nd Edition accessory
by TSR Staff

The biggest, baddest creatures of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting make their debut in AD&D® 2nd Edition game format. This appendix goes with the second *Monstrous Compendium* binder, and it covers the nasties that have populated TSR's oldest campaign setting.

Suggested Retail Price: \$9.95/£6.50
Product No.: 2107

DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*

D&D® module
by John Nephew

This first adventure to supplement the boxed set, *Dawn of the Emperors*, is an introductory module for the novice D&D® game player. It's party time in Thyatis City for the DM and the players who want to experiment with a freer form of role-playing!

Suggested Retail Price: \$5.95/£3.95
Product No.: 9284

MLBA1 *Mutating Mutants* MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ module by Bruce Nesmith

An introductory module designed for newcomers to the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, MLBA1 takes place as the New Mutants and Wolverine must discover who is causing all of them to further mutate and why! Don't miss gene- and hair-splitting adventure.

Suggested Retail Price: \$5.95/£3.95
Product No.: 6893

Horselords

The Empires Trilogy, Book One by David Cook

Between the western Realms and the eastern lands of Kara-Tur lies a vast, unexplored domain. For centuries, the "civilized" people of the Realms gave little notice to the nomadic barbarians who roam these lands. But now a powerful leader has united the wild horsemen into an army that threatens the entire world!

Suggested Retail Price: \$4.95
Product No.: 8478

NEW PRODUCTS FOR JUNE

XXVc™: *The 25th Century Role-Playing Game*

Boxed set
by Mike Pondsmith

Buck Rogers has thrilled America for decades with his far-flung exploits. Now you can take part in his heroic adventures with this boxed set that contains everything you need to help Buck in his battle against RAM. This is perfect for SF fans and first-time role-players alike!

Suggested Retail Price: \$24.95/£15.95
Product No.: 3562

SJA2 *Skull and Crossbows*

AD&D® SPELLJAMMER™ module
by Nigel Findley

Ship-crushing monsters, ghostly galleons carrying loads of undead pirates, lich-driven ships with hordes of alien parasites—all these and more can be found in this, the second module for the SPELLJAMMER™ campaign setting. This book is a collection of short adventures and encounters for your PCs adventuring in the SPELLJAMMER™ universe.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.95/£5.95
Product No.: 9286

PHBR3 *Complete Priest's Handbook*

AD&D® 2nd Edition supplement
by Aaron Allston

Now get new, useful information to enliven your PC priests! Included are over 60 priest kits for worshipers of sun gods, gods of magic, gods of law, and more. Plus, there are rules for designing a mythos and tailoring the cleric class to fit any mythos you select.

Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00/£9.95
Product No.: 2113

DLA2 *Dragon Knight*

AD&D® DRAGONLANCE® saga module
by TSR Staff

The sequel to *Dragon Dawn*, this second module in the Taladas Trilogy continues the exploration of Krynn's other continent, the ravaged Taladas.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.95/£5.95
Product No.: 9278

OA6 Ronin Challenge

AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Module by Curtis Smith and Rick Swan

In this *Oriental Adventures* module, a great martial arts tournament is being held in Shou Lung. Yet, there is more here than meets the eye, and the trail leads southwest into the unknown wilderness of the Shao mountains.

Suggested Retail Price: \$9.95/£6.50
Product No.: 9257

GAZ13 *The Shadow Elves*

D&D® Gazetteer
by Carl Sargent and Gary Thomas

This is 1990's first addition to the popular Gazetteer series for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system, and it describes the underground world of the shadow elves—who have created their own empire *under* the Known World. Learn about the culture, environment, and daily routines of these exotic demihumans.

Suggested Retail Price: \$9.95/£6.50
Product No.: 9287

TSA1 *The Web*

TOP SECRET/S.I.™ Adventure
by TSR Staff

This 96-page book is a series of adventures designed to test the best qualities of role-players in the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. The Web plans to take over the world; can you stop it?

Suggested Retail Price: \$9.95/£6.50
Product No.: 7638

Kaz, the Minotaur

DRAGONLANCE® saga Heroes II Trilogy,
Volume One

by Richard A. Knaak

After the defeat of the Dark Queen and the death of Huma Dragonbane, Kaz hears rumors of evil incidents. He returns to warn the Knights of Solamnia—and is plunged into a dark nightmare of magic, danger, and *deja-vu*.

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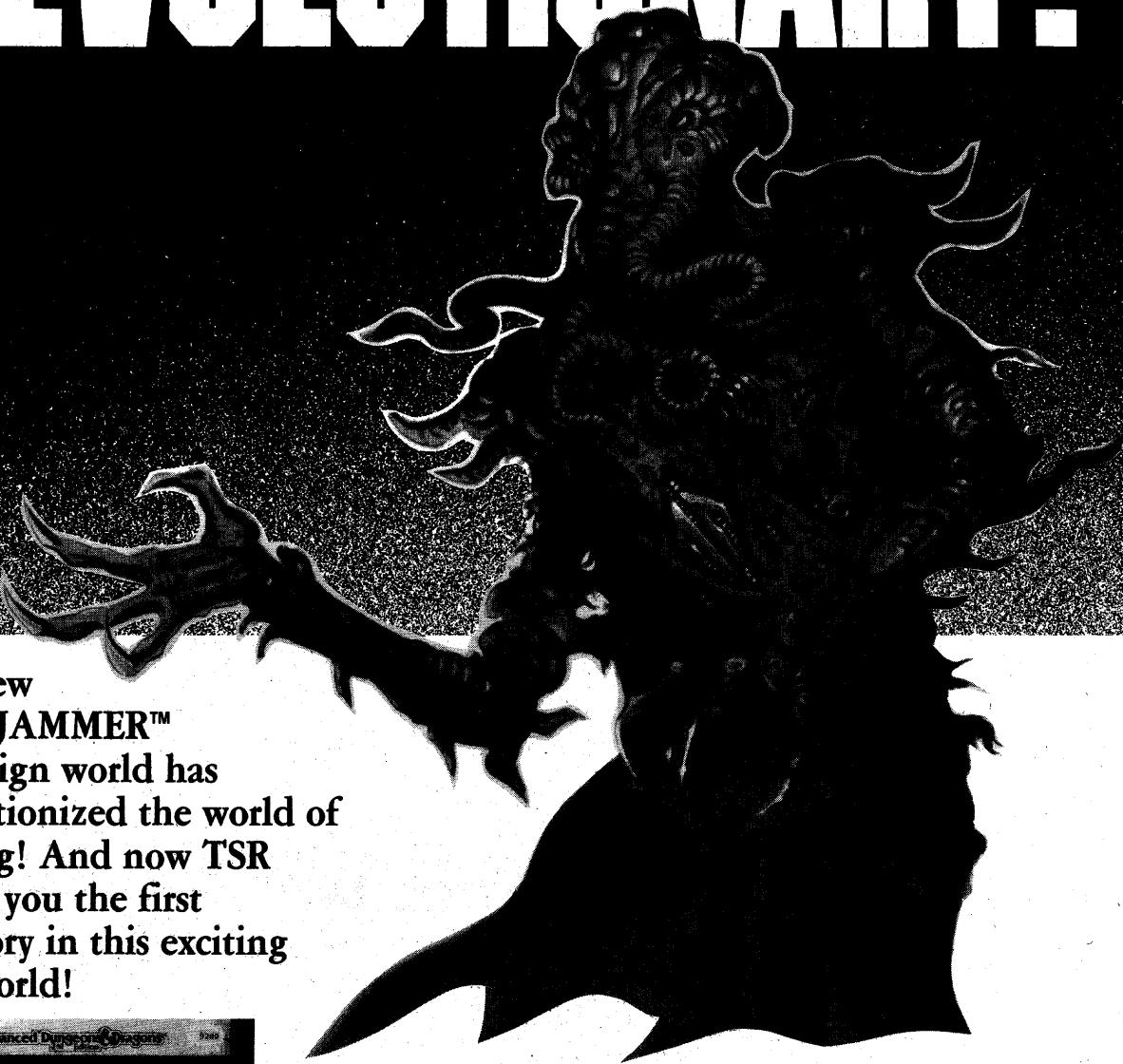
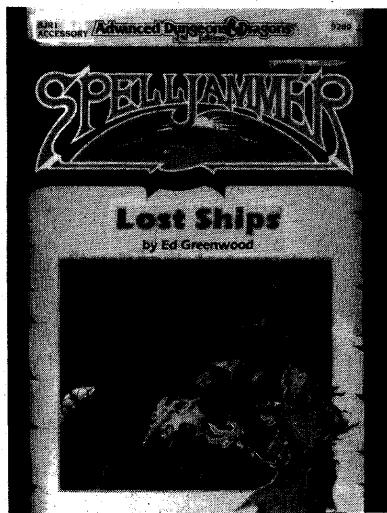
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Where do you think those basket hats of fruit keep coming from?

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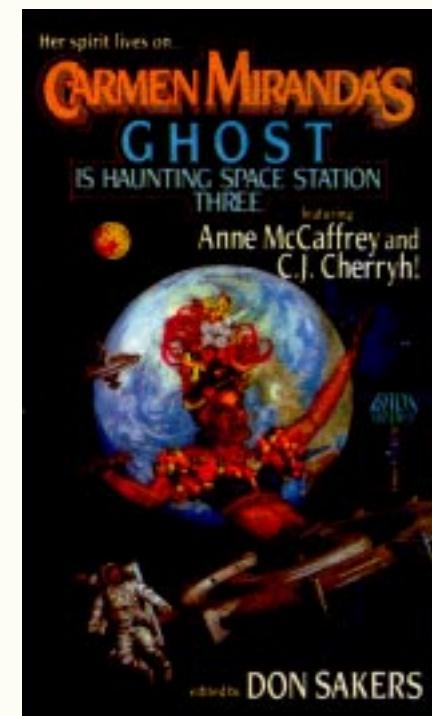
CARMEN MIRANDA'S GHOST IS HAUNTING SPACE STATION THREE

Don Sakers, ed.

Baen 0-671-69864-8 \$3.95

Carmen Miranda's ghost is haunting Space Station Three. Half the crew has seen her, plus the Portmaster and me. And if you think we've had too much of Cookie's homemade rum, Just tell me where those basket hats of fruit keep coming from!

So begins the song by Leslie Fish, and so begins Don Saker's unique anthology of short stories arising out of the tune. A stranger concept for a short-story collection is hard to conceive, but the results prove that a good idea can be translated into just about any medium one cares to suggest.



The song itself (available from Firebird Arts & Music; see DRAGON® issue #155, page 92, or the anthology for contact details) is a lively, wry, rhumba-beat number, and the tone carries over into many of the stories. But Sakers hasn't assembled a one-note orchestra; there are murder mysteries from Bruce Barnett and Esther Friesner, romances from Anne McCaffrey and W. D. Woeltjen, heroics courtesy of Sakers and Julia Ecklar, a complex chess yarn from Melissa Scott and Lisa Barnett, an obliquely unfolding news story from Betsy Marks and Anne DeMaio, and a contribution from Fish herself.

The tales' common origin is just as well defined. The authors make substantial use of those fruit-filled hats, and a reference to "phase generators" later in the song becomes a significant plot point in some stories. There are Portmasters of varying personalities and proclivities roaming the anthology, and other tidbits from the lyrics make their way into the book as well.

All of this makes *Carmen Miranda's Ghost* a unique textbook for anyone concerned with adapting story material from one source to another—game campaigns included. Sakers gives readers an answer to the old question, "Where do authors get their ideas?"—and goes on to show what writers do with those ideas once they're in hand. I can't recall another book that illustrates the process more broadly, and that makes the anthology of special value.

Sakers' editing does have two distinctive traits. On the positive side, his brief notes following each story, are uniformly provocative, with refreshing quotes added to the usual biographical data. But his story selections reflect an oddity: Both he and B. W. Clough have two tales each in the collection, though his afterword says he received enough material to fill two books. One justifiably wonders whose work missed the cut while those second stories were published. The anthology as printed is a pleasure not to be missed, but the addition of two more voices might have made it more pleasant still.

EYE OF THE WORLD

Robert Jordan

Tor 0-812-85009-3 \$24.95 hardcover
Tor 0-8 12-50048-2 \$12.95 trade paper

First I got the "advance reading copy," complete with full-color foldout cover and a folder full of elegant promotional materials. Then came the trade paperback edition, and on its heels a copy of the simultaneous hardbound edition. And when the book hit my local stores, it did so complete with 6'-tall cardboard displays at the front doors. Rarely has so much effort been expended on behalf of such ordinariness.

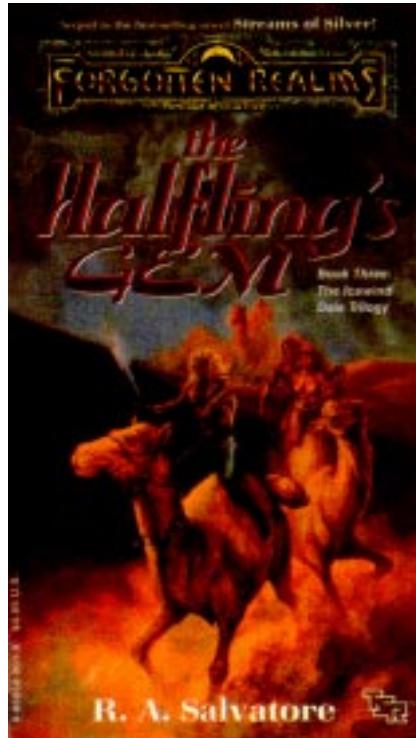
It's not that Robert Jordan's *Eye of the World* is a bad book. The prose is smooth enough, skillfully maintaining a formal lyric quality. Jordan creates a vast world full of detail and mystery. And despite its large cast, readers are in no danger of confusing the characters. But after swimming through 657 pages of fairly small print, readers may well surface wondering whether anything interesting has actually happened.

Jordan's prior publications consist largely of novels about Conan the Barbarian. That's both surprising and revealing—surprising because *Eye of the World* is light-years from Conan in style and execution, but revealing because, like the Conan cycle, Jordan's new novel is rooted in the work of other hands.

The saga's atmosphere is drawn liberally from Tolkien, complete with scholarly appendix, though Jordan's nomenclature also recalls old Arthurian, Celtic, and Middle Eastern traditions. Its conflict traces its roots to C. S. Lewis and various Judeo-Christian sources. And its plot structure, though more finely convoluted, bears striking resemblances to Terry Brooks' first *Shannara* novels. Like Brooks, Jordan takes young men from an obscure village, sends mysterious evil creatures to kill them, then follows their continent-spanning adventures as they acquire companions and are maneuvered into saving the world.

Most revealing, though, are comparisons with two other sagas in Jordan's corner of the high fantasy arena: Tad Williams' *The Dragonbone Chair* and Guy Gavriel Kay's *Fionavar Tapestry* trilogy. All three echo Tolkien's Middle-earth, and all three share similar narrative cadence. But the other books are distinctive in ways *Eye of the World* can't match. *Dragonbone Chair's* world projects a diversity and completeness Jordan's lacks. And Kay's *Fionavar* novels bend the rules of high fantasy by importing heroes from present-day Earth, thereby justifying and validating Kay's recasting of mythic and Arthurian lore. Beside these two epics, Jordan's simply lacks uniqueness.

Put another way, *Eye of the World* is the ADVANCED D&D® game's equivalent of a GREYHAWK® campaign based solely on published sourcebooks and modules. It's a perfectly acceptable, even skillfully constructed adventure, but its hardly worth the degree of fuss its publishers have lavished on it.



THE HALFLING'S GEM

R.A. Salvatore

TSR 0-88038-901-X \$4.95

There's at least one letter in my files complaining about the fact that R. A. Salvatore's second book only rated a sentence or two in the "Recurring roles" section of this column. I sympathize with the sentiment, but the sheer number of new books worth discussing usually means that only something extraordinary will prompt more than one full review per trilogy. The *Halfling's Gem* meets that requirement handily—I don't find many novels that leave me pausing for breath after a swordfight. And fewer still com-

bine the relentless swordplay with equally deadly wizardry.

Though it's billed as the third book in a trilogy, Salvatore has made the tale more or less self-contained. The focus this time is on powerful guildmaster Pasha Pook's pursuit of a magical pendant stolen years earlier. Assassin and master swordwielder Artemis Entreri has finally tracked the item, but is partially distracted from his mission as he and the drow adventurer Drizzt Do'Urdan match blades in a personal vendetta. Nonetheless, Entreri recovers both the pendant and its halfling liberator, and sends both back to Pook for final disposition.

The novel promptly becomes a continent-spanning chase, with enough obstacles and villains to populate a year's supply of swashbuckler movies. There's an intricate sequence on the high seas as the heroes' ship dodges a pirate fleet, an extended battle in the sewers of Calimport (where four invaders challenge a host of were-thieves), and a final showdown that ranges across several planes of existence. Throughout the nonstop action, Salvatore's narrative skillfully matches convincing detail with rapid-fire tension. And the danger feels all the more pressing because Salvatore builds characters that catch the imagination: Entreri, deadly as swordsman and as strategist; Drizzt, whose nature is wrapped in paradoxes; LaValle, the pragmatic wizard-for-hire who will work for whoever survives.

The *Halfling's Gem* is more than "just" a sword-and-sorcery yarn. It's sword and sorcery done with intelligence, style, and enthusiasm, with a degree of unabashed vigor that's not easy to find in fantasy adventure nowadays. That puts Salvatore in a unique position: He's both upholding the best traditions of the genre, and setting standards that could well become traditions of its next generation. And if that isn't a sufficient recommendation, I don't know what is.

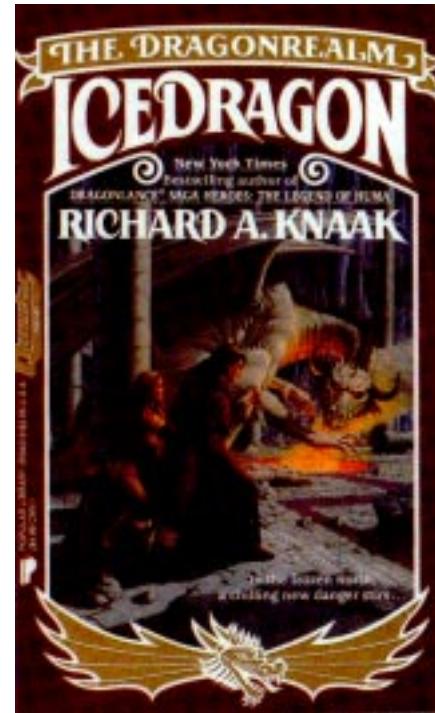
ICE DRAGON

Richard A. Knaak

Questar 0-445-20942-9 \$3.95

I have decidedly mixed feelings about this second book in Richard Knaak's Dragonrealm series, but then, *Ice Dragon* is a mixture in the literal sense. Its ingredients are pulled wholesale out of a freezer full of leftover ideas, and stirred with the hurried energy of a hungry cook. The result is no culinary classic, and poor graphics overwhelm the cover art, making the novel look like a gamebook. It's not bad for leftover stew, though, and Knaak throws in so many tidbits that almost everyone is bound to find something he likes.

The milieu, in which varicolored shape-changing dragons rule and spawn armies of humanoid warrior-drakes, resembles TSR's Krynn in concept but utterly lacks the stylized atmosphere of the



DRAGONLANCE® saga. Into this setting Knaak places Cabe Bedlam, orphaned son and grandson of wizards, and his romantic and magical ally Gwen (no points for noticing the similarity between these names and the heroes of various Christopher Stasheff novels). And the eternal winter that serves as this volume's prime threat is a familiar and often-used mythological device.

Knaak's story elements may be individually stale, but he deserves credit for the sheer volume of plot built into the saga. Between the four or five dragon-kings competing for ascendancy, the benign and mostly human Gryphon, the once-powerful avian race of Seekers, a possibly sentient library that predates some five known ages of civilization, and a mysterious assassin from distant lands, Knaak has more than enough material to keep his story bubbling vigorously throughout. Amazingly enough, the various subplots neither boil over nor simmer to no purpose; by the novels end, major issues are resolved and the questions that remain are peripheral to the main danger from the Ice Dragon's wintry spell.

Make no mistake: *Ice Dragon* is at best a slightly above-average entry in a menu full of fast-food fantasy adventures. Or perhaps the better analogy is the Chinese-food joke that half an hour later, you'll be hungry again. Either way, the novel is no gourmet dish, but it's reliable and palatable reading for readers in the mood for what Knaak has to offer.

THE MUTANT SEASON

Robert Silverberg & Karen Haber
 Doubleday 0-385-24721-4 \$18.95
 hardcover
 Doubleday 0-385-26647-2 \$8.95
 trade paper

The Mutant Season isn't a particularly likeable book. The husband-and-wife team of Robert Silverberg and Karen Haber present their mutants-eye view of America with an edged tale that cuts a little too close to real-world prejudices and attitudes to be exactly pleasant in the reading. Nor is it Literature in the academic, capital-L sense of the word; its pace, plot, and characters are those of a mainstream political thriller crossed with a young-adult romance. It's not a comfortable novel, but it is compelling, and its vision is only a few unsettling degrees removed from the world that MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game players know and love.

These mutants have neither traditional superpowers nor superheroic attitudes; instead, they are secretive, almost tribal folk who have emerged from secrecy to proclaim their rights and ambitions, which include social acceptance for their kind and eventual control of the political arena. That's not good news to some, though, and newly elected mutant Senator Eleanor Jacobsen must walk a carefully diplomatic line between her fellow paranormals and her opponents, including a Senatorial colleague whose fundamentalist religious views cast mutants as the spawn of evil.

But when Jacobsen's moderate approach is abruptly short-circuited by an assassin, the relationships between mutant and mundane citizens are severely tested on a variety of fronts. One plotline follows the intrigues loosed upon Jacobsen's death, while another traces mutant siblings testing the limits of young adulthood. Michael Ryton's parents disapprove of his non-mutant girlfriend, while Melanie Ryton's seeming lack of mutant gifts keeps her from achieving much-desired status among her kindred. Circumstances conspire fiercely against them both, drawing them away from their dreams with insidious efficiency.

What makes the novel absorbing is the empathy Silverberg and Haber create between their characters and the reader. Michael, Melanie, and Senatorial aide Andie Greenberg all are persuasively real, with reactions that might well be our own if the novel's world truly existed. And though there are enough psychic fire-works to provide a dimension of danger and excitement, the authors keep them to a plausible minimum that doesn't interfere with the personal conflicts.

Inevitably, *The Mutant Season* begins a series, but its conclusion merely leaves nagging threads rather than a movie-serial cliffhanger, and it stands intelligently on its own. Perhaps that intelligence is the book's real hallmark, as it offers a sensitive, immediate glimpse into a world we usually think of as no more than an engaging and adventurous fantasy. If there's a moral for gamers, it may be that not all heroes wear capes and tights, and that not all stories worth telling are about heroes.

TOO, TOO SOLID FLESH

Nick O'Donohoe

TSR 0-88038-767-X \$3.95

Shakespearean cyberpunk with shades of Asimov? Well, not quite. But Nick O'Donohoe's newest novel poses a complicated murder mystery concerning an android theatrical company, a computerized culture in which clothing is alive while entertainment is populated by programmed ghosts, and layer upon layer of drama and deception with Hamlet at the center of it all.

The androids are unusual for two reasons. First, they're the only live actors left in a world where holographic software can recreate any actor in any role—John Wayne as Captain James T. Kirk, for instance. Second, they don't merely act their roles—they live them, off stage as well as on. *Hamlet* is *Hamlet*, no more and no less. And when the androids' designer is found dead, it is Hamlet who takes over as theater director and begins to ask questions about the death.

The lone human in the company is Horatio, whose nature is known only to Hamlet and to the reclusive tycoon who has hired Horatio to learn the troupe's true purpose. Often he's the only human in the entire theater, for most of the audience attends only by holographic projection. Nonetheless, he manages to involve himself with a female patron who shares his hidden passion for acting, and shades of an intellectual romance emerge before further tragedy strikes.

O'Donohoe's puzzles blend the setting's potent bioengineering technology with relationships, and moral dilemmas drawn from *Hamlet* and other plays, Shakespearean and otherwise, pepper the tale as well. Those who haven't been exposed to the Bard's works will likely find themselves tangled in confusion; this is one case where prior knowledge is more or less necessary. But his characters are true both to their theatrical roles and their larger personalities—Hamlet included—and the unraveling is nearly as dramatic as one of Isaac Asimov's robotic mysteries.

Too, Too Solid Flesh is an unlikely candidate for translation into gaming media. Yet in its own fashion, it may be among the most thoughtful examinations of roles and role-playing in its genre. If it does nothing else, Nick O'Donohoe's novel proves once and for all that TSR's book-publishing program has graduated beyond "gaming novels" into the ranks of a full-fledged professional enterprise.

THE APPRENTICE

Deborah Talmadge-Bickmore

Del Rey 0-345-36139-3 \$3.95

According to the biographical note in the back of *The Apprentice*, Deborah Talmadge-Bickmore writes "the kind of novels that she wants to read but has difficulty finding." That's both revealing and mysterious—it isn't surprising that she

can't find many novels resembling hers, but I'm not sure what literary quality she thinks she's missing.

In-depth characterization is a possibility. Three people form the book's entire cast (not counting a couple of walk-ons). There's the sorceress Shayna, ambitious and reclusive mistress of a remote tower; Corwyn, the contradictory young man who arrives to seek training under her; and Jaimah, who serves Shayna in non-magical ways and sees danger both in Shayna's personal goals and Corwyn's unrevealed secrets. If Talmadge-Bickmore's intent is to fill in every detail of her players' personalities, then she's done a credible job.

Fast-moving plotting, by contrast, isn't likely at all. It takes Talmadge-Bickmore just a few pages to establish the relationships between Shayna, Corwyn, and Jaimah. The remainder of the novel forces the three to reenact the same basic confrontation over and over in a cycle that's apparently supposed to build up tension. Instead, it builds irritation, as the characters must repeatedly step back from opportunities to resolve their personal crises. The scenario is arguably realistic, but it makes all three characters look wishy-washy.

It can't be unexpected twists, either. The tale's romantic element is clear from the start, and anyone who doesn't unravel Corwyn's secret within the first few chapters simply isn't paying attention. Here again, the ending is obvious long before the characters get around to achieving it.

What *The Apprentice* provides, then, is a lesson by counter-example in the art of setting a story's pace. But it's a lesson that few gamers should need to learn; unlike novelists, role-playing referees can hear their audiences yawning.

Recurring roles

A consumer update first: I'm now informed that material missing from Isaac Asimov's "Northwestward" in the original printing of *The Further Adventures of Batman* (reviewed here in issue #149) was restored in a later printing; the complete tale also appears in the April 1990 issue of *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*.

Meanwhile, editor Martin H. Greenberg has assembled another collection, *The Further Adventures of the Joker* (Bantam, \$4.50). This second book is less uneven than the first, with a number of properly insane yarns. Prize honors, though, go to the one piece whose punchline had me laughing aloud: "Dying Is Easy Comedy Is Hard," in which Edward Bryant and Dan Simmons combine for one of the slyest duels of one-upsmanship in all Bat-history. One warning: Some of the stories are fairly graphic, so the young or the weak-stomached should read with caution.

Katharine Kerr's *Dragon Revenant* (Bantam, \$18.95 hardcover/\$8.95 trade paperback) finally resolves the reincarnated

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conflict that has driven her series about the long-lived wizard Nevyne and young adventurer Jill. That in itself is a step forward for Kerr; also helpful is that this novel avoids the back-and-forth leaps in time characteristic of the previous books. It's easily the most accessible of the Deverry novels, which is ironic in a book that reads like a conclusion. A fifth book is evidently planned, but will need to establish a new focus for the series.

Three trilogies conclude this time out, mostly to good effect. The Work of the Sun (Ace, \$3.95) finishes off Teresa Edgerton's Celtic-style Green Lion trilogy with a solid tale whose flavor becomes distinctly Arthurian, with a knightly quest, a sorcerous castle, and a test of honor at its climax. As a whole, the trilogy has shown an appealing blend of intimacy and adventure in three remarkably diverse novels, and Edgerton's next project should bear watching. So will Sheila Gilluly's, as Ritnym's Daughter (Signet, \$3.95) concludes a cycle about the magical Greenbriar Queen. Gilluly's most notable accomplishment is her portrayal of Prince Gerrit, who must walk a difficult line between an unpopular public persona and a very different private self.

Also credible is *Brothers Majere* (TSR, \$3.95), in which Kevin Stein chronicles an early adventure involving brothers Carromon and Raistlin, concerning a very strange puzzle and a dangerous triangular

romance. It's narrowly the best of the DRAGONLANCE Preludes, and it provokes guarded optimism as to forthcoming DRAGONLANCE projects. Part of Krynn's success has been a product of its carefully stylized atmosphere; Stein captures the mood more accurately than have some recent writers.

There's finally a sequel out to Will Shetterly's *Cats Have No Lord*, but *The Tangled*

Lands (Ace, \$3.95) is as strange a sequel as you're likely to find. This time the fantasy is juxtaposed with a science-fiction plot involving an interactive computer game using cyberpunk brain-feed technology. It's unique, often indirect, and skillfully told, but I'm still trying to decipher the ending. (That's not so much a complaint as a reaction—but there had better be another book coming.) Ω

Continued from page 67

evening. Farm folk here eat heavily and go to bed early, to rise with or before the dawn and get out into the fields again. Many nap at highsun (noon), making the early afternoon another quiet time in the village.

An oddity found on occasion in Eveningstar's streets and trees are small, fluffy, winged cats. These cute, mischievous little terrors are semiwild and thought to be the result of some long-ago wizardly experimentation. Villagers feed them and try to prevent the worst of their vandalism and aerial catfights, valuing their owl-like rodent control in the fields. Most of the flying cats lair in the gorge and hunt the farm fields night and day, avoiding local cats and dogs rather than fighting or tormenting them. A few mages have come seeking these creatures as familiars. At least two (Lord Tessaril and Maea Dulgus-

sir, who still conceals her magical skills from locals and visitors alike) have done so successfully. The flying cats have the same stats as listed for "Mammals, Small" in the *Monstrous Compendium*, volume 2, with the addition of flying movement 10 and maneuverability class C.

Of old, many mages dwelt near Eveningstar, in the woods or in small, now-ruined towers or caves on the edge of the Stonelands. Their spells and magic are still hopefully sought by many, and at least one adventuring band each summer comes to try its luck at gleaning treasures from the Haunted Halls (notably fewer stalwarts come exploring the halls in winter).

Harsh winters hereabouts are known as "wolf winters" because of the wolves from the Stonelands, which come down the gorge to hunt in Cormyr. The rest of the year, the wolves' distant, haunting howls can be heard at night. Ω

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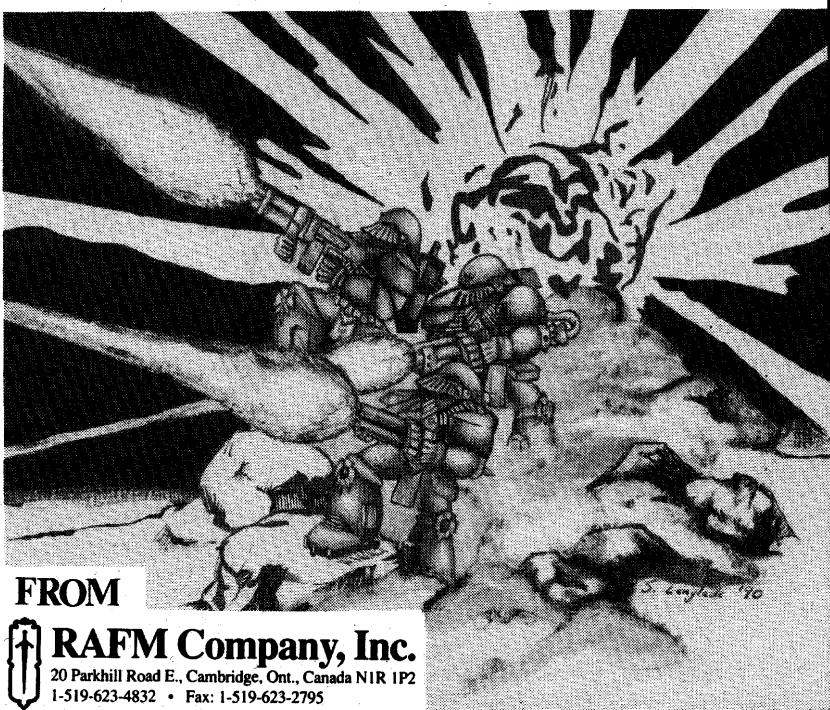


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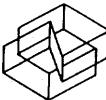
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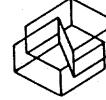


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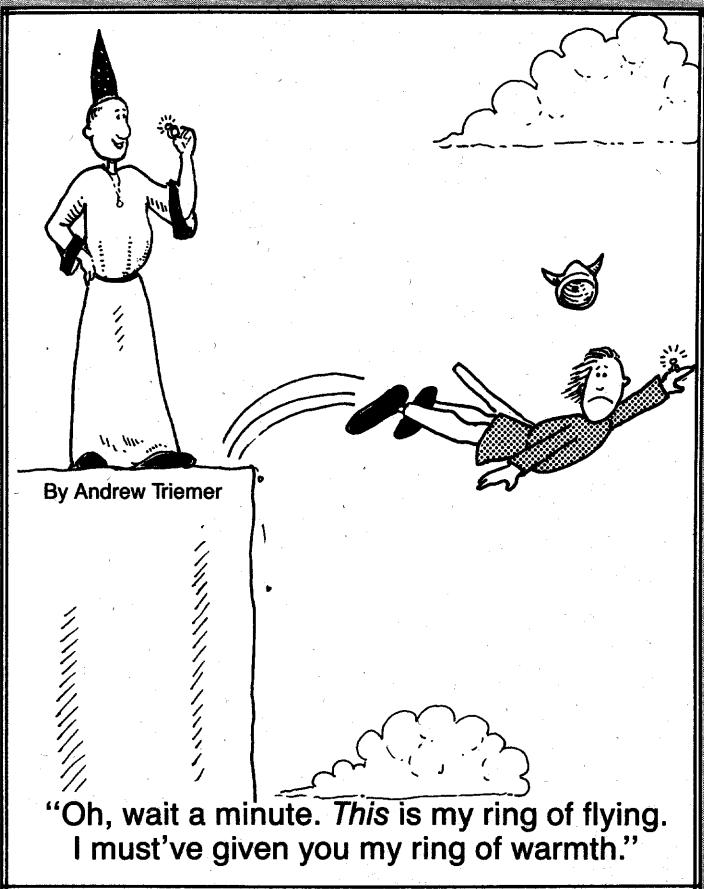
DRAGONMIRTH



"Got any snake-bite kits?"



"Here's something down your alley. . . .
a guard at a railroad crossing."



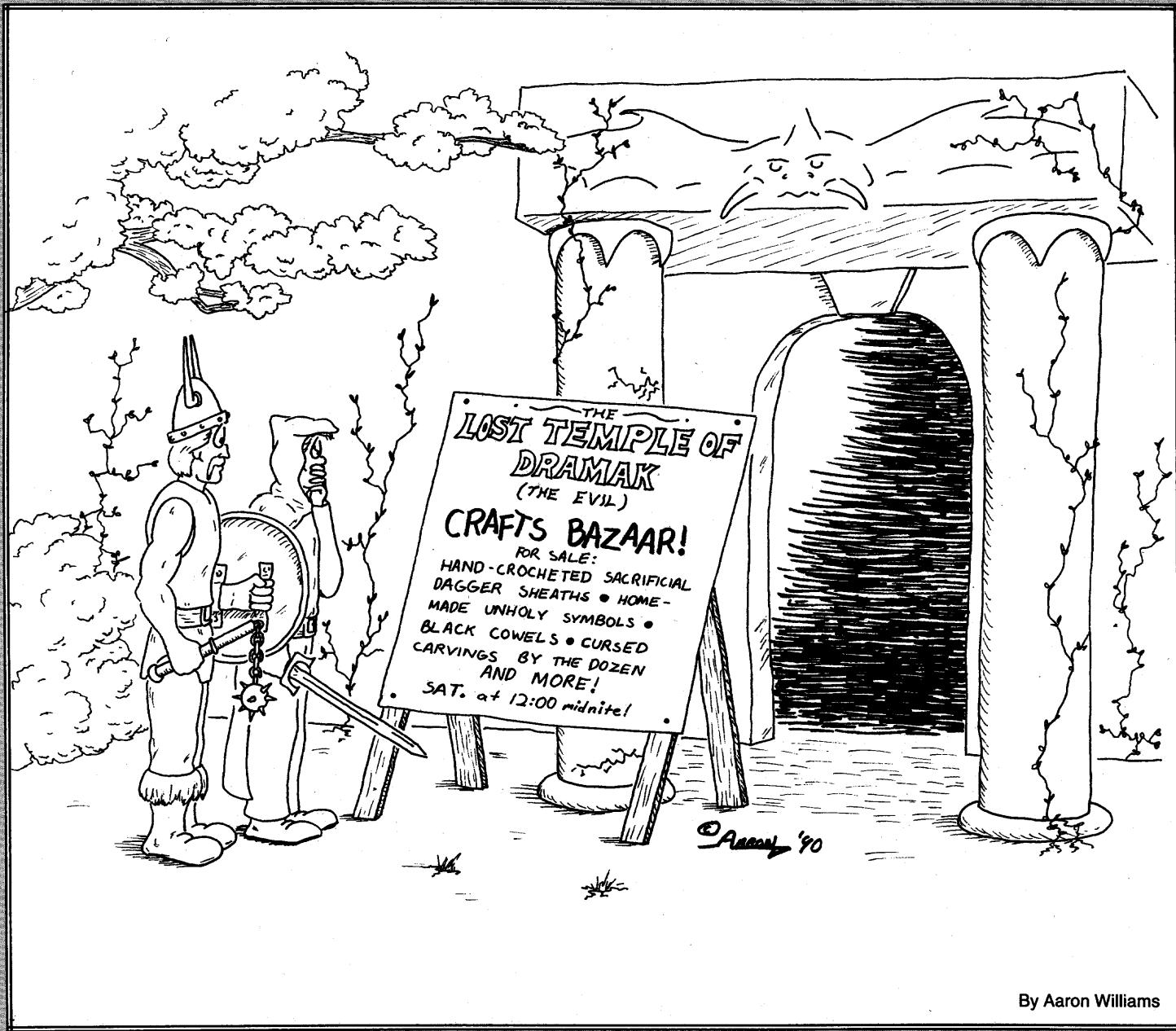
"Oh, wait a minute. *This* is my ring of flying.
I must've given you my ring of warmth."



"Oh, Lenny, you're such a clown!"

Yamara THE GOD.

By Barbara Manui & Chris Adams



By Aaron Williams

THE ROLE OF Computers

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Tons of clues, hints, nudges, and secret advice

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Welcome to the "game hints in abundance" column. You'll find tons of clues later on in this column that could save your game characters from disaster.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the numerous readers who have written to us with their likes, dislikes, suggestions, and constructive criticisms. We read each letter and try to improve our column to match your needs. For example, Chet Holloman of Upland, Calif., would like more information regarding the media and memory requirements that PC/MS-DOS games require. Starting with this issue's column, we'll address system requirements for those computer platforms where such are necessary.

We wish we could recognize all of the letters we receive, especially those containing game hints. Unfortunately, time and space restrictions won't allow this to occur, but we will try to present as broad a range of letters as possible. Again, thanks for taking your time to write. Continue to send in those hints!

Reviews

Computer games rating

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Origin
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Knights of Legend *****
PC/MS-DOS version \$49.95

Remember in DRAGON issue #155 when we published a "not recommended" review for Origin's *Knights of Legend*, Apple II version? Well, we still don't recommend the Apple II version, but we heartily advise PC/MS-DOS adventurers to grab this program as quickly as possible and go questing. *Knights of Legend* for PC/MS-DOS computers is truly a great game offering. You can copy the disks to your hard disk drive, so there are no interminable disk swaps during both action and nonaction sequences. As all of the code resides in one subdirectory on your hard disk, the program easily manages the adventure. We reviewed *Knights of Legend* with an EGA card and were amazed at the high-quality graphics. With mouse and keyboard capabilities, *Knights of Legend* offers extremely sophisticated adventuring that will require months to complete.

The battle scenes must be experienced to be believed. You account for each move of every member of your party, from how to approach an enemy, to deciding how to strike and where to aim the blow (and your defensive reaction). Initially, you will wonder how on Ashtalarea you are going to create a party strong enough to survive even the most meager encounter. This ability will come after you learn how to compose and equip your first party. Keep in mind that you will need money to stay at a reputable inn to heal your characters, should they survive the first difficult battles. Also be certain that bows and arrows are given to those who can use them; they

can save your characters' necks. And be certain to use terrain to your advantage. Nothing stops an enemy's missile better than a tree! It will definitely take four or five combats to become familiar with the battle system but, once learned, you'll find it to be the most realistic combat system you've yet experienced on a computer.

With an extremely high dollar-to-play ratio, *Knights of Legend* for PC/MS-DOS computers receives a five-star rating from us. As we stated in the earlier review, Todd Mitchell Porter is to be highly praised for his programming skills. We only wish the Apple II version could measure up to the high standards set by the PC/MS-DOS version of this outstanding adventure.

Absolute Entertainment
251 Rock Road
Glen Rock NJ 07452
(201)652-7079

A Boy and His Blob *****
Nintendo Entertainment System \$49.95

David Crane's *Pitfall* continues to hold the record for the best-selling home video game of all time, as it spent 64 consecutive weeks as number one on Billboard's home video-game chart. David Crane is back, and he has just released his first game for the Nintendo Entertainment System: *A Boy and His Blob - Trouble on Blobonia*. This is definitely the game to buy if you are an NES gamer.

Every boy on Earth during the 21st century has a buddy from outer space, and the hero of this game has a blob from Blobonia. Blobonia is a planet run by an evil emperor who makes everyone eat only junk food (vitamins are poisonous to him).

Blob came to Earth and befriended the

boy. In return, Blob needs to return to Blobonia to defeat the evil emperor. First the twosome need to get a healthy amount of vitamins, and that means that they need money. They'll have to search underground caverns for hidden treasures.

Blob can help the boy recover these treasures, because Blob loves jelly beans and can change shape depending on what type of jelly bean it eats. The boy begins with 12 different jelly beans and can find a few more flavors on his travels. The shape that Blob assumes is determined by the spelling of the flavor of the jelly bean. For example, a licorice jelly bean changes Blob into a ladder, while an apple jelly bean changes it into a jack.

As the boy and Blob search through the underground caverns, players soon discover the various ways in which the boy can perish. Among them are falling for more than one screen without aid, falling into water, or being hit by a subway serpent, a falling rock, or other nasties. The boy gains an additional life after picking up five peppermint jelly beans. Players need to experiment in order to avoid obstacles and to obtain treasures, making this the most entertaining part of the game.

We enjoyed this game's creativity and originality. The graphics are amazing, especially for the NES. The backgrounds on the street and of Blob are well detailed. We also enjoyed the game's concept of needing a buddy to complete the game. We hope that David Crane has as much success with *A Boy and His Blob* as he had with *Pitfall*. He's one of the few truly unique game designers working today, and his products are fresh and entertaining. If you own an NES, get this game!

Accolade

550 South Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

Day of the Viper

Commodore Amiga 2000 version \$49.95

Get ready for nonstop action and superb arcade-game play as *Day of the Viper* brings you head-to-head against GAR (Genetic Android Race), a prototype for a bioengineered race that has gone berserk. GAR is now methodically destroying members of the Sun League Defense Force (SLDF); it is your assignment, using the Viper robot, to destroy GAR and his own robotic minions.

This is no easy task. We've been playing



Day of the Viper (Accolade)

Day of the Viper for approximately seven hours and still haven't managed to get out of the first building on the SLDF Base Complex. And we must get out to search the five other buildings, each with five floors, for floppy disks that hold the key to the destruction of GAR and his mechanical storm troopers. GAR wasn't stupid, so he destroyed the central program that could spell his doom. But if you find all of the floppy disks and the communications chip, then upload the data to the main computer and boot that system, you'll win this incredible action game.

Your Viper's graphic screen consists of not only a 3-D view screen, but also a scanner button to scan the surrounding area for doorways and goodies (such as energy crystals, deflector shields, repair pods, weapons, and so on). Gauges reflect your shield strength and weapon temperature. You can install chips and components found within the complex into the circuit board and the correct sockets, thereby making your Viper more dangerous.

You can save your game to disk at any time you wish, or load a single saved game. A grouping of four direction buttons in the center of the Viper screen directs your unit's movements. Other gauges include an energy and damage indicator, as well as a B.U.D. (Battered Unit Damage) Light. A plotter, when activated, maps each floor for you, revealing doorways and unclaimed items in the halls. Each doorway is color coded, and you need the appropriate color access card to gain entry. You'll find repair and power rooms where you can take care of your Viper's needs, but the power rooms require an energy siphon, while the repair rooms call for a repair room activator. There are also terminal rooms, turbolift rooms (for accessing various floors in each

building), shuttle rooms (to catch rides to an adjoining building), and security rooms (where you can turn on the anti-intruder system — after you've found the security room activator — to take care of GAR's henchmachines in the hallways).

As you cruise the halls of the SLDF complex keep an eye on the 3-D display, the plotter, and the short-range sensor. The latter device indicates how close an enemy unit is to your Viper, as well as the unit's direction. When you encounter an enemy, quickly click on your shield icon, activate your weapon, and move the mouse cursor into the 3-D window. The cursor turns into a cross-hair. Position it on the opposing metal meanie, then press the mouse button to fire. However, especially at the start of the game, don't forget that your weapon will malfunction when it overheats!

There's more than just enemy droids to worry about. GAR and his minions have also left little traps in the hallways, such as gyroscope traps that spin you around and toss you away, and basic explosive traps that can do a great deal of damage.

Day of the Viper is an outstanding action game. The Amiga graphics are first rate. The sound enhances play, and the search for the floppy disks is quite exciting. Amiga gamers will surely want to possess this goodie for their mouse-movin' fingers!

MicroIllusions

17408 Chatsworth Street
Granada Hills CA 91344
(818)360-3715

Dr. Plummet's House of Flux

Commodore Amiga 2000 version \$34.95

Dr. Plummet (a weird and quite possibly insane fellow) has invited you to his House of Flux to test your skills on four different missions, each with seven levels. The player must fly a ship equipped with a gun and shield to rescue six astronauts held captive in each level. You must avoid or destroy obstacles that confront you. These barriers include walls, guns, bases, and weird things that only Dr. Plummet could create.

Operating the ship is quite simple using the joystick. Moving the joystick to the left or right rotates your ship in a counter-clockwise or clockwise direction. Push forward on the joystick, and your ship thrusts forward. Pressing the joystick button fires the guns while the space bar raises shields that protect your ship from some obstacles and enemy fire. You must

also keep constant watch on your fuel level or you might find yourself rotating aimlessly-instant death on most levels.

This game reminded us of *Oids*, released by FXL, but with a twist. Each level has a specific theme, with differing backgrounds and obstacles that remain true to that theme. On one level, the player floats in front of Flux dollars with walls constructed of gold bars. On some levels the walls will kill the player, while on other levels the walls simply bounce the player off in the opposite direction. We found this concept interesting, but *Oids* is a much more entertaining game. We recommend this game to arcade enthusiasts who have played *Oids* and who might enjoy a similar environment. Plus, should you succeed in conquering the levels, who knows—you might even get to meet Dr. Plummet.

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 877-7777

Keef the Thief

Commodore Amiga 2000 and
Apple IIGS versions \$49.95

X
Here is another case of what is probably a great program that we consider unreviewable because of an antiquated copy-protection scheme. Perhaps if you have the eyesight of a eagle, then *Keef the Thief* might be worth your while. However, for us it was not.

The problem rests with the scheme employed by Electronic Arts to make certain that only honest purchasers play the game. In the center of the user's manual are eight pages, dark brown in color. (They cannot be photocopied.) The text on these pages is in what must be six-point black type. Even in direct lighting, we had trouble reading the words, which you need since they are the codes through which the game starts. You are asked to enter a response to a three-card shuffle. The cards give you three names which you must then match on these rotten brown pages. The fourth cards name must then be typed in, hopefully matching the code. In addition to going blind just trying to find the three-card match, we typed in what we thought was a correct match but were told they were "incorrect." We gave up. First of all, copy protection of this type is absurd. None of us will struggle simply to appease a publisher's copy protection beliefs. Secondly, if copy protection is needed, it must at least be made



Knight Force (Titus)



legible with larger type size or on pages that illuminate instead of eliminate interest. We would almost prefer the key-disk method of protection over the method employed in this game. More acceptable methods of copy protection include using a code wheel or entering a specific word into the game from a page or paragraph in the user's manual.

Keef the Thief appeared to be one of the more interesting and entertaining games we've received for review. It's too bad the copy-protection method utilized mandates

that it be put on our not-recommended list.

Titus

20432 Corisco Street
Chatsworth CA 91311
(818) 709-3692

Knight Force

Commodore Amiga version \$44.95
*
Sword-wielding action comes to the computer market again, but this time unsuccessfully. Titus's new release, *Knight*

Force, makes the player a champion who must travel to five different time zones in order to battle an evil magician who has captured a princess. To reach the magician, the player must possess the correct amulet for that time zone. That means fighting a variety of enemies in order to retrieve it—that is, if you consider only three different types of enemies a "variety." Unfortunately, this magician has left clones of himself in all of the different time zones. The player must kill all of the clones in order to slay the real conjurer and rescue the fair maiden.

The graphics are jerky, and sound is basically nonexistent. We expected much more from an Amiga game. Additionally, the game play and plot have been implemented in about 20 other sword-fighting games. You can move, jump, and duck with the joystick; pressing the joystick button and moving the joystick handle implements a combat maneuver. We don't recommend this Titus title to anyone, but we feel other Titus offerings have far more play value. If a publisher can't release something at least partially innovative, it shouldn't bother with the cost of producing an "also-ran."

News and new products

Accolade (408-985-1700) has released *Gunboat: River Combat Simulation*. You will experience the drama of tight-quarters river combat and the anxiety of meeting an ambush around the next bend. *Gunboat* puts you in command of a high-speed PBR (Patrol Boat Riverine) as you embark on more than 20 realistic missions along the uncertain jungle rivers of Vietnam, Colombia, and Panama. The price is \$49.95 for PC/MS-DOS computers.

Activision (415-329-0800) has released *Mech Warrior*, the personal computer version of FASA's BATTLETECH® game. Set in the 31st century, *MechWarrior* players pilot BattleMechs, 30'-tall combat robots, in a desperate time of continuous warfare. Five Successor States fighting for ultimate supremacy following the collapse of the Star League. The player becomes a mercenary warrior who operates one of these 'Mechs and takes on missions for any of the five States that will pay for a job well done. The object of the game is to destroy the Dark Wing Lance and regain the dukedom of Ander's Moon. To accomplish this, players must earn enough money on missions to eventually build a lance (group of four) of 'Mechs. There are eight types of 'echs to choose from. The price is \$49.95

and the game has been released for PC/MS-DOS computers.

For NES gamers, Accolade has released *Ghostbusters II* and *Stealth ATF*. *Ghostbusters II* reunites the ghostbusting gang from last summer's movie to save New York City from new ghosts and ghouls. *Stealth ATF* finds players jetted to the sky and forced to confront dangerous enemy aircraft in this realistic flight simulator. Also appearing is *Archon* for NES, a chesslike strategy game fought between light and dark forces.

F-14 Tomcat is out for PC/MS-DOS gamers. This game recreates the career of a U.S. Navy fighter pilot from training school at Whiting NAS in Florida to the Naval Weapons School at Miramar NAS in California. The game features accurately simulated, real-life flight characteristics like aerodynamic modeling, true-to-form loops, realistic acceleration and flight ceilings, as well as black outs and red outs when strong enough g's are pulled. The price is \$44.95. A version is available for the Commodore 64/128 at \$39.95.

Infocom games, distributed by Activision (415-329-0800) is releasing *Circuit's Edge*. Players assume the role of Marid Audran, a private investigator trying to make a living in a dark and malevolent ghetto called the Budayeen. It is the year 2202, and the human brain can be wired to accept "moddies," modules that transform you into someone else entirely, real or fictional, and "daddies," chips that give temporary knowledge of any subject under the sun—and in the world of the Budayeen, having the skills of a cat burglar, spy, thief, or kung fu master could well save your life. The characters are taken from two science-fiction novels written by George Alec Effinger: *When Gravity Fails* and *A Fire in the Sun*. Initial release will be for PC/MS-DOS computers at \$44.95.

Bethesda Softworks (301-926-8300) has released *Vortex, Battle at the Edge of the Universe*. This game combines real physics with high-power action, graphics, and smooth animation. The price is \$39.95 for the Commodore Amiga.

Broderbund Software (415-492-3200) is releasing a new version of the company's jet-combat game, *SkyChase*, for PC/MS-DOS computers, for \$34.95. It is a one- or two-player game that captures the excitement and tension of head-to-head jet combat. The simulation is modeled after USAF and Navy flight-training competitions.

Capcom USA (408-727-0400) has released *Willow* for the NES. This is an action-

packed video game based on the major motion picture from LucasFilm, Ltd. Faithful to the movie's plot, Willow takes players on an exciting adventure to a final, one-on-one confrontation with the evil Queen Bavmorda. The price is \$49.95.

Data East USA (408-286-7080) is releasing a number of new products in their new Draconian line of fantasy role-playing games that transport the players to magical kingdoms and distant planets. It features lifelike 3-D graphics with sound effects, and it will soon be released for PC/MS-DOS, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST computers. The first of the Draconian modules is *Drakken*, wherein the player becomes master of a mission to save the primordial dragon, whose destruction will mark the end of the kingdom. Another new title is *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess*, a puzzle-solving adventure that transports players to a bizarre and futuristic fantasy world.

Other new offerings include *Batman: The Movie* for C64/128, Amiga, and Atari ST computers, for \$29.95, \$44.95, and \$39.95, respectively. This program faithfully follows the motion-picture plot and incorporates portions of the film's original soundtrack. You assume the role of Batman to avenge crime and thwart the evil antics of the city's feared enemy, the Joker, by using the Batmobile and the Batwing.

Also appearing is *The Untouchables*, an action-packed adventure game that brings players to the mean streets of Chicago to capture mobster Al Capone and to restore law and order. This game is based on Brian De Palma's motion picture and is priced at \$44.95, \$39.95 and \$29.95 for the Amiga, Atari ST and C64/128 computers, respectively.

Osborne/McGraw-Hill (415-548-2805) has published *The King's Quest Companion*. This book, written by writer and broadcaster Peter Spear, provides the helping hand many gamers need to play the King's Quest series of successful animated adventure games from Sierra. The book covers adventures I-V. The price is \$14.95.

Origin (603-644-3360) has released *Bad Blood*, a story of prejudice and oppression in a postapocalyptic era. Initially released for PC/MS-DOS and C64/128 computers, the game is set in a time after man has unleashed a nuclear holocaust that has ravaged the face of the earth. Survivors of the holocaust (some human, some mutant) now struggle for existence on a barren, blasted plain. This full-color 3-D world offers role-playing experience coupled

with arcade action from start to finish. The price is \$49.95.

Taito (604-984-3344) is another great game company that is going absolutely crazy with new product releases for the NES. The first is Demon Sword, a classic tale mixed with magic. In a land of impossible evils, all paths lead to the Dark Lord. Only you, the hero warrior, can confront him. There are seven levels and three worlds to master.

Another new NES entry is *Dungeon Magic: Sword of the Elements*. An ancient prophecy has come true. You must embark on a perilous journey through the kingdom of Graudes, held by the evil enchantment of Darces the Overlord, to unearth clues to the answer.

Taito has also released the sequel to *Renegade*, its software hit: *Target: Renegade*. Mr. Big is bad, and he's got your brother. You've got to struggle through the streets and mix it up with a pretty rowdy

crowd to rescue him. Survival is extremely difficult.

Virgin Mastertronic (714-833-8710) has several new releases coming: *Mega Pack*, a compilation of 10 arcade games for the C64/128; *House of Cards*, a collection of six, two-player card games for PC/MS-DOS machines; and *Butcher Hill*, a military arcade game for the C64/128.

Clue corner

The Bard's Tale I (Interplay)

Within the darkness that surrounds Mangar's room in the tower, level five, is a very special weapon. After you go through the door, turn right and move forward until you hit a wall. Turn at the wall and travel north until you run into another wall. Turn left until a magic mouth asks a question. Answer "SPECTRE SNARE," and you will receive a weapon that critically hits every time you strike a successful

blow. The weapon also greatly lowers your armor class (-10)!

Dan Howarth
Flagstaff AZ

The Bard's Tale II (Interplay)

In the PC/MS-DOS version, don't bother with the Sword of Zar. This version doesn't seem to possess this weapon. The answer to the riddle is "DER," but you won't get the sword. "EARTH COMPRESSED FOUNTAIN" will get you into Dargoth, Level 4. The Portal is just around the corner. If you're having trouble with a puzzle in any Electronic Arts game, call 1-800-245-4525 and ask about the company's clue hot line!

Dan Howarth
Flagstaff AZ

In the Grey Crypt, make certain to answer the sphinx in level one with the answers of "Wize One" to make the stairs appear.

Be sure to kill all seven statues in Dargoth's Tower, level two, to make the sword of Zar appear in the Maze of Dread, level two.

A trick: Give all your weapons to one man, then save him in the guild. Go to Garth's and sell all of it. Put the gold in the bank. Then save the game and turn your computer off. Guess what? You still have all of the weapons and money in the bank!

Bryan Kampe
Gahanno OH

The Bard's Tale III (Interplay)

The following may be of help to players when wondering about the number of places of protection for the following armor items: Titan plate-10, Diamond plate-8, Diamond shield-5, Minstrel's Gloves (for Bards only)-5, Yellow Staff-4, Mithril Bracers-4 (however, only 2 for rogues!), Diamond Bracers-4, Blood Mesh Robe-4, Adamantine Gloves-3, Luck Shield-3, Elf Cloak-3, Mithril Helm-2, Shield Ring-2, Mage Staff-2, Leather Gloves and Death Ring-1 (only protects those in the party), Hunters Cloak-1.

Mark Horsford
HQ 66th MI BDE

Deja Vu II (ICOM)

You are in the Las Vegas train station. It appears as though the man with the paper isn't paying any attention to all of your problems. Perhaps he is ignoring all of your attention-getting attempts because he really isn't that important to the game.

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The Lessers

Bubble Bobble (Taito)

(The following game hints are courtesy of the *Taito Times* game newsletter.)

To beat the Grumple Grommit, you must catch the Drug of Thunder. Then, move to the far left and right edges of the game screen. Blow thunder bubbles and ride them up the screen. Drop down on the bubbles and release a wave of lightning bolts. The Grumple Grommit will always delay his next attack for one or two seconds with this strategy.

To obtain the Drug of Thunder, move to the left and corners of the screen. Blow thunder bubbles into the walls. Lightning bolts will stream across the bottom of the screen. By the way, an expert Bubble Bobble player always tries to stay behind Grumple Grommit as he travels across the screen.

Bursting groups of beasties simultaneously is worth big points!

The Cross of Fire, Cross of Thunder, and Cross of Water are extremely powerful. Always obtain them, if you can.

An easy way to use continue options is to play the game in the two player mode, even if you're playing alone!

Champions of Krynn (SSI)

If your character is wounded, a good way to simultaneously recover from injury and memorize spells is to use the program's (F)ix command. This way, your characters are returned to full hit point status and memorize spells before any sort of interruption can occur.

A good way to fight dragons by keeping them too busy to use breath weapons on you is to have a character retreat from that beastie. This causes the dragon to use all of its attacks on that one character. This character certainly may suffer damage, but think, of the trouble you'll save your adventuring party, especially when fighting red dragons with hit points!

Don't forget that you can change the difficulty level of the game should you constantly run into trouble and be unable to overcome the conflicts.

Have your knights trade their money to other characters in your party before entering an Outpost, if you don't want

them paying their tributes.

A Stinking Cloud spell is quite effective! During the Test of Fear in Sir Dargaard's Tomb, don't be afraid to constantly send one knight through the rings of fire that appear. Don't worry about his or her hit points.

If you manage to reduce an aurak to his new, arisen form, have all of your characters run away from him in separate directions. That way, when he explodes, he will only damage a few or only one of your characters.

Traveling merchants offer magical items at much lower cost than the same items can be purchased in the cities.

Go with Maya to avoid unnecessary fighting.

Look for the training center in Kernen. Be careful of pickpockets in Sanction.

Robert Heim and Jeff Buser
Minneapolis MN

Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)

It is assumed that the party has the three artifacts needed to affect Tyranthraxus. Two "save" disks are necessary before you enter the ruined temple in Myth Drannor. Save your game once before entering the temple and put this disk aside. Once the party enters the temple, there is no escape until Tyranthraxus is killed. It is also impossible to rest to regain spells once inside the temple.

I suggest having all characters well stocked with healing potions. Conserve area-effect spells until the final battle. If your party dies in the temple and you feel your saved position in the temple is too weak, you can go back to your first "Save" disk. Remember to save the game once again before returning to the temple!

Be sure to cast what spells you can before entering that final door on the second level. Acting in haste could enhance your performance. Minor globes can help thwart Tyranthraxus's shocking personality. Two tactics should be used that are dishonorable to the paladin in your party: a) retreat to the doorway; b) shoot Tyranthraxus from afar with that nice bow you found in the graveyard.

Brendan Grant
Las Vegas NV

DungeonMaster (FTL Games)

Be selective when picking members of your party. There are at least four "Journeymen" each one specialized in one area, such as being a fighter, and so on.

Whenever you get the chance, have a

nonwizard try to cast LO-FUL, a weak light spell. After about 10 attempts, those attempting this spell should gain a wizard level.

The magical box can be used only once. Place it in the "action" hand; when you use it, it freezes the monster(s) for a few seconds.

You can kill mummies and rock monsters with a Fireball spell. With the rock monsters, you have to wait until they stand up.

When you kill one of the purple serpents, it can be used as food. Also, when you kill one, the other one may run away.

Having trouble on the third level (not counting the level with the Hall of Champions) with the gate that closes as you walk toward it? Try this: Stand on the place that opens the gate. Turn left and touch the hole on the wall. This teleports you closer to the gate. With practice, you will be able to slip under the gate after teleporting.

Here's how to save the "Chambers of the Guardian" on the second level: Go to the gate with the chest behind it. Touch the blue crystal on the left; this moves the chest to a different gate. Keep touching every crystal that controls the gate that the chest is behind. It will soon be teleported outside the gates. Inside is a mirror. Hold the mirror up to the "eye" located across from the gates, and a new passage will open up. Inside this passage is the key.

Deryl Mitzen
Linden NJ

Hero's Quest I (Sierra)

In order to obtain higher points, be certain to ask *everyone* questions.

The rhyme ". . . until a hero from the east frees the man from the beast, the beauty from the band, and rids evil from the land . . ." contains hints for the player. The "hero from the east" is you. Freeing "the man from the beast" means freeing Baronet Barnard von Spielburg from his current bear form. Give him food when you first find him, and he will calm down. Then walk into the next room (or sneak if you can) and kill the kobold wizard to get his magical key. Magic cannot harm this wizard after the first shot, so it is best to use daggers. Freeing "the beauty from the band" means transforming Elsa von Spielburg into her normal self. She is the brigand leader. In order to do this, you must throw the dispel potion at her. To obtain the dispel potion, talk to the dryad (in the clearing into which the white stag runs). To get to Elsa, you must either go

through the brigands front gate (the ambush) or find the secret passage to the front door. Go to the archery board at midafternoon and listen to the two traitors. Wait until they finish talking, then kill the brigand and get his key.

Ridding "evil from the land" means killing Baba Yaga herself. Ask the skull on the front gate about the rhyme. To get the glowing gem, give 50 apples to the frost giant. When you get to the hut, stand back and say the rhyme. Enter the hut and get the mandrake for Baba Yaga. Get the mirror from the desk in the brigand leader's (Elsa's) room. Show the mirror the second time you enter Baba Yaga's hut, and she will be driven from the land.

When you have done this, you have won the game. Make certain you do not go to the castle after saving both the Baronet and Elsa, or you will win the game without destroying Baba Yaga.

A few other hints include: Sleep in Erana's Peace—your Health, Stamina, and Magic all raise to maximum. Cast Open in Erana's Peace (if you are able) to get "the secret of Erana's peace." To quickly raise your statistics, first kill the boglins in their clearing, get training from the weapons master at the castle, throw daggers at the target, then climb trees, and so on.

If you are a mage, raise your spell points and play the mage's game at Erasmus's. Don't try to kill Erasmus! If you do, you will be teleported from his house and, when you try to enter again, the questions asked will be such things like: What is the airspeed of an unladen sparrow in flight? Give me a break! Also, the hermit (Enry) has the trigger scroll.

If you are a thief, get magic and parry at the start (this is the best character, because then you have most of the skills needed to win the game). At night, pick locks on the doors of the houses (but not the shops) and enter them. Steal the occupant's valuables and sell them at the thieves' guild. The guild is under Crusher the goon's chair. To get the password, go to the alleyway in Spielberg at night. Go to the tavern and give Crusher the sign (show the sign) and give him the password. Type the password. Sell your items. Good adventuring!

Robert Tapella
Darien CT

MechWarrior (Activision)

When you start the game, try to work for either house Davion or Steiner. House Davion will usually give up to 25% on

salvage rights, and you can also increase the amount of C-Bills that they pay you. House Steiner will give up 15-20% of salvage rights, but they do pay more C-Bills.

Try to get missions that call for defending bases. The enemy 'Mechs will try to destroy the base and will usually take one or two shots at you. Try to destroy the legs of the opposing 'Mechs. By doing this, you do not damage the expensive head or chest components, and you will get more money when salvaging these units.

Also keep track of the time you spend, as you have only five years in which to complete the game. Take the contracts that are closest to the planet on which you are stationed. After a few missions, look at your News Net and try to find a man called Grig Griez. There will be a lot more traveling around before finding out what is actually going on.

Try purchasing a Shadow Hawk because of the unit's long-range weapons. Try targeting a 'Mech that is about 1,500 meters away and start firing at it with your AC and LRMs. By the time the enemy 'Mech is close, start hitting it with the SRMs and medium laser. You can usually hit 'Mechs that aren't in range of your weapons, but make sure you're on target before firing!

The final battle is tough! Try to have at least 2 or 3 Battlemasters before attacking.

Garrett Sommer
Hagerstown MD

Always be sure you have enough C-Bills to travel to a friendly planet that offers contracts. Most of the planets you get to in your search for the Dark Wing don't have contract offices.

Tasha is to be trusted.

If, on the NewsNet, it says Jarris McBrin has appeared with the chalice and taken the dukedom, it is too late.

Bill "Roes" Ruhsam
Manchester NH

Might and Magic II (New World Comp.)

An easy way to retrieve the orb from Dawn's Cavern is to simply give it to one of your henchmen, then dismiss him.

Travel to A1-11,3 in the 7th Century and kill Spaz Twit for a phaser.

To enter the Druid Caverns, the password is DRUIDS. Speak with the high druid in the NE corner and then find your foe in the far west section.

On the NE part of D1 is the entrance to the Dragon's Dominion, where powerful magicks lie at the eastern end, inside the

walls. Watch out for ancient dragons!

To reach the Gemmaker, enter the volcano near the plane of fire that is isolated from the rest of the mountains.

Castle Xabran offers the location of all spells and henchmen as well as containing the four elemental discs needed to obtain the talons.

It is easy to reach Corak's body in his tomb if you have someone who can cast Holy Word.

In the mountain range south of Luxus Palace, you can find powerful items (+ 20 short swords and so on). They reside at Dino Ranch and Deaths Camp. It is best if you climb to the very end of the path.

The location for the Paladin's Frost Dragon is at C3-15,0.

When you travel back in time, you appear in the Wuagmire Bog. Don't go north unless you have an orb, or else you may meet Megadragon and the 32,000 points of damage he can inflict upon your party.

To solve the cryptogram at the end of the game, think of the U.S. Constitution.

These are the Element talons location on their planes:

Water Talon -10,10
Fire Talon -4,4
Air Talon -11,7
Earth Talon -8,8

Steve Clark
Phoenix AZ

Operation Wolf (Taito)

(The following game hints are courtesy of *Taito Times* game newsletter.)

When you meet the General in the jungle, aim at his right shoulder. You'll save the hostage using this strategy.

The best way to rescue hostages in the concentration camp is to shoot at the enemies in front of a hostage, then quickly start shooting behind him. This trick will stop the knife soldier.

You can destroy a helicopter and save the hostages by firing a grenade over its rotor blades.

Motorcycle soldiers attack in groups. Keep your gunsight trained on the first soldier that appears. You can quickly get rid of the others with this strategy.

The Hind helicopter gunship always waits for two seconds before firing its missiles. Use this time to attack. Save any grenades you can during the airport mission.

Free bullets can quickly turn the tide in "do or die" situations.

Pool of Radiance (SSI)

(For PC/MS-DOS adventurers who would like to "edit" their characters, Steve Bo-pray writes from Japan with the following tip that he claims is far easier than the method we described in our column in issue #145.)

Use PC Tools or Norton utilities to edit your [PC/MS-DOS] characters. The files are named in two ways: for characters not in a party—name.CHA; for characters in a party—CHRDATAx.SAV (x = 1 to 6). The first byte in line one contains the number of letters in the character's name; the name follows. The second line contains the character's six physical attributes. By substituting the appropriate hexadecimal value, you can change these items. Other lines contain armor class, experience, level, etc. Locate these items by converting the desired trait from decimal to hexadecimal notation, then search the file for the appropriate item. For numbers greater than hex FF (decimal 255), don't forget to reverse the bytes. You should only have to resort to this method of changing the character if you want to change your character's name or if you made a mistake by not thinking before pressing a key. But please keep in mind that *Pool of Radiance's* character-generation routines are more than generous, and the multiple-save options allow you to try many routes to get around a dangerous situation. The game is more than fair, and resorting to cheating by editing character files for easy gains only lessens the challenge and fun of the game.

1. In the slums, all the spells you'll need are Sleep and Cure Light Wounds (and in some cases, Detect Magic).

2. There are magical weapons all over in the slums, like a flail, some arrows, bracers, and a scroll, but they aren't with the random monster encounters.

3. Ohlo wants the potion but doesn't want to pay more for it than the Long Sword + 1. If you're greedy, you might pay instead.

4. In Sokal Keep, the password for the undead when you come in is SHESTNI, the one for the spectres is LUX, and going out after freeing the spectres is SAMOSUD.

5. In the NE square of the keep, there is an illusory wall to the north. In the NW corner of that hidden room are some clerical items, such as a Mace + 2 and Chain Mail +1.

6. Taverns are best avoided.

7. Tavern Tales 22 and 23 are true—the

dragon is somewhere near 9,9 NW in the Dragonspine Mountains. The kobolds have a wyvern, trolls, and wild boars with them.

8. When the council decides it's ready, there is a large nomad tribe to the NE that will soon be attacked by a large army of kobolds. If you defeat them all, you'll get a wagonload of gold, a Wand of Magic Missiles, and a Two-Handed Sword +2.

9. The pyramid on Sorcerer's Isle is tough! Be ready to heal often, and don't be surprised if driders and lizardmen finish you off. The driders have access to all spells, including Fireball, so get close to them or die.

10. There is a cave of gnolls a little E by NE of the kobold cave along the Twilight River. There are many of them, and it's almost impossible to get out. There are gnolls and trolls in the NE corner of the cave.

Chris Carman
Oxford OH

When you go to Valjevo Castle, go toward the "inner tower" and find Tyranthraxus. He will appear in the form of a warrior. Defeat him, then go through the south wall. After searching there, you will find the "real" Tyranthraxus. His guards might be a problem as each one has 87 hit points, so try paralyzing them!

Ed Martin
No address given

1. Look in the first square of the hallway east after finding the kobold king dead. Tell him the truth—he is valuable in the Valhingen Graveyard.

2. When you encounter trolls, parlay and be abusive. If you enter combat, the character in position 1 will have the ability to regenerate (Note: This applies to the C64/128 version).

3. In Valhingen Graveyard, all the set encounters with the undead must be completed before you can enter the secret door at 15,1 to fight the vampire. Be sure to destroy his coffin first!

4. Tyranthraxus is not a man, as would appear when encountering a "front" of his at the Valjeva Castles central tower. To defeat him, have your magic-users and clerics memorize Hold Person and Charm Person spells instead of the wasteful Resist Fire spells. The most damage Tyranthraxus did to my characters was 15 hp damage using a breath weapon.

5. After Tyranthraxus is defeated, characters may rest in the Town Council, as it

is totally cleared after you receive the Crown Jewels.

John Garguilo
Raleigh NC

(Want to duplicate important items in a character's possession while playing the PC/MS-DOS version of this game?)

Save your game while near the "Thieves training" square. When you've done this, continue the game. Go to "Thieves training" and create, if required, a character named "C." Let C join the party by using the Add command. Remove a character if necessary from the party to allow C to join. Then, oblige character "A" to trade (using the View command) item "B" with C. Remove C from the party. Exit to DOS (using the Exit command) or reboot your computer without saving the game. Restart POOLRAD. Character A still has item B. In addition, C also has B. Go back to the "Thieves training" square, allow C to join the party, trade B with another character, then remove C.

You can duplicate scrolls (fireball included), magical armor and weapons, money and jewelry in this manner as many times as you wish. This method cannot duplicate characters. The items being duplicated seem not to be individualized by a unique name or number, so the gods never curse you when you duplicate in this manner. And since the game is not a fight-only adventure, you might enjoy it even more if your characters are just a little bit more powerful than the creators of the game had imagined.

Michel Welsh
LaSalle, Quebec

That's it for this issue. We hope these game clues help some of you. Don't forget to mail your tips and hints to: The Lessers, 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583, U.S.A. Remember, the adventuring party you save might be your own. Until next month, game on!

Ω

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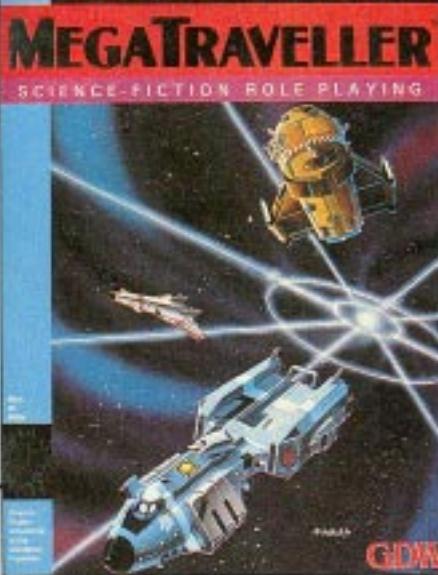
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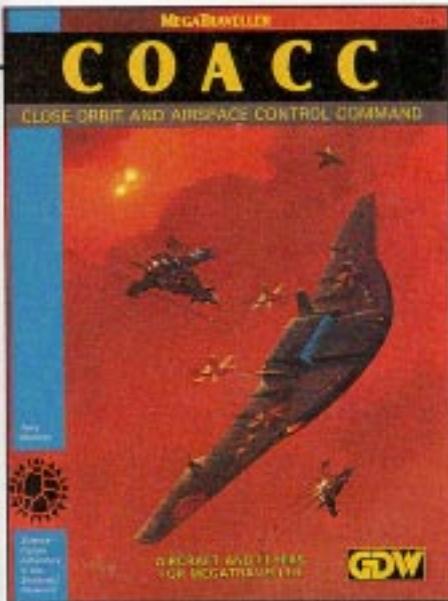
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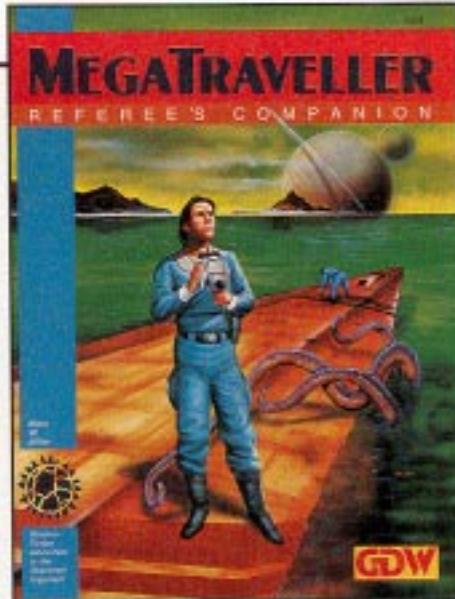
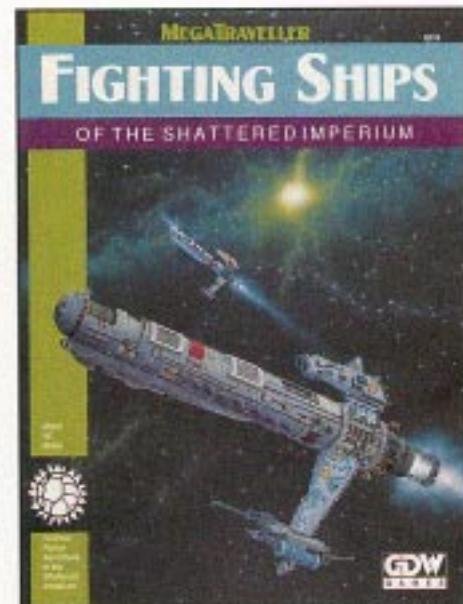
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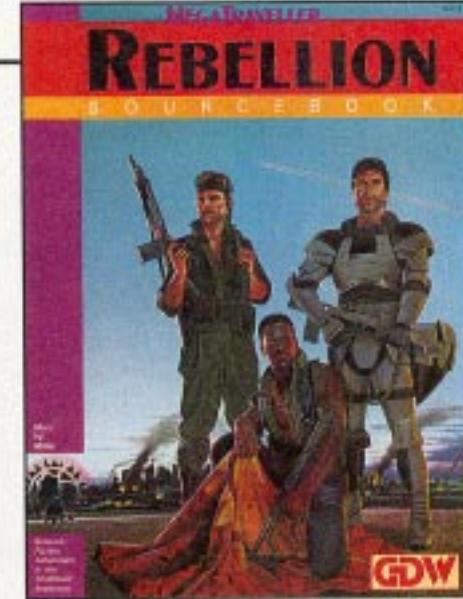
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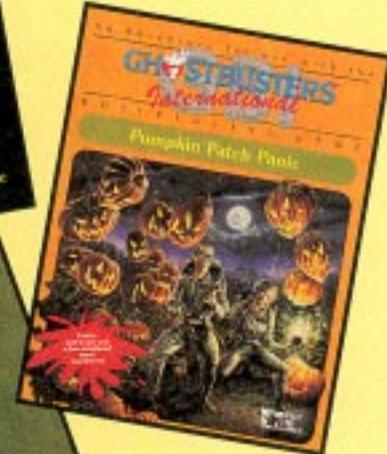
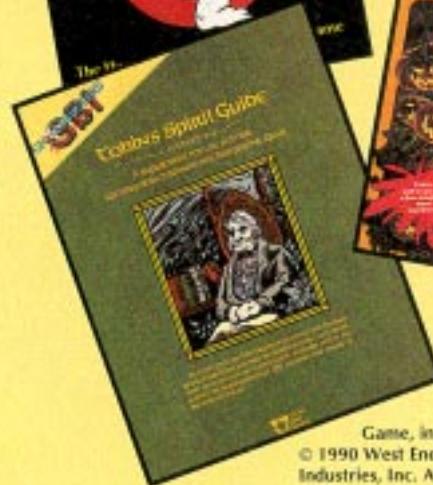
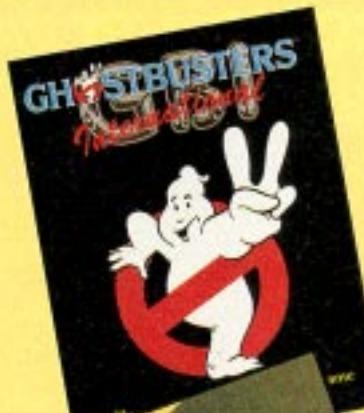
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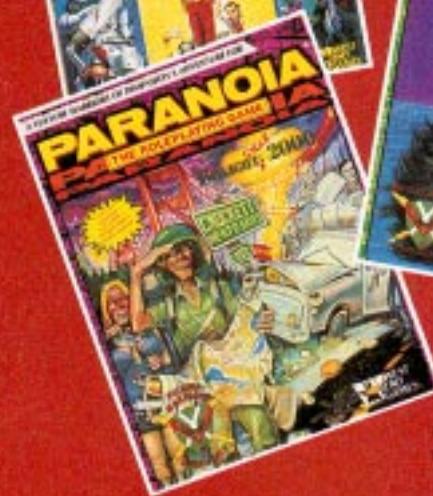
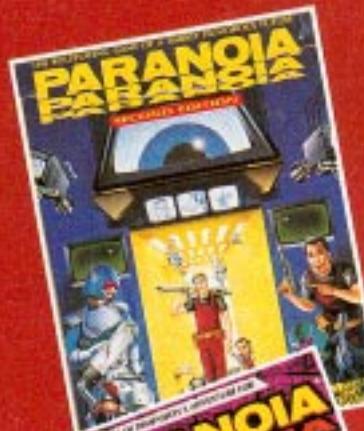
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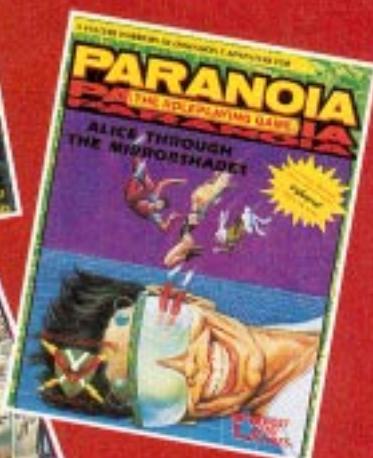
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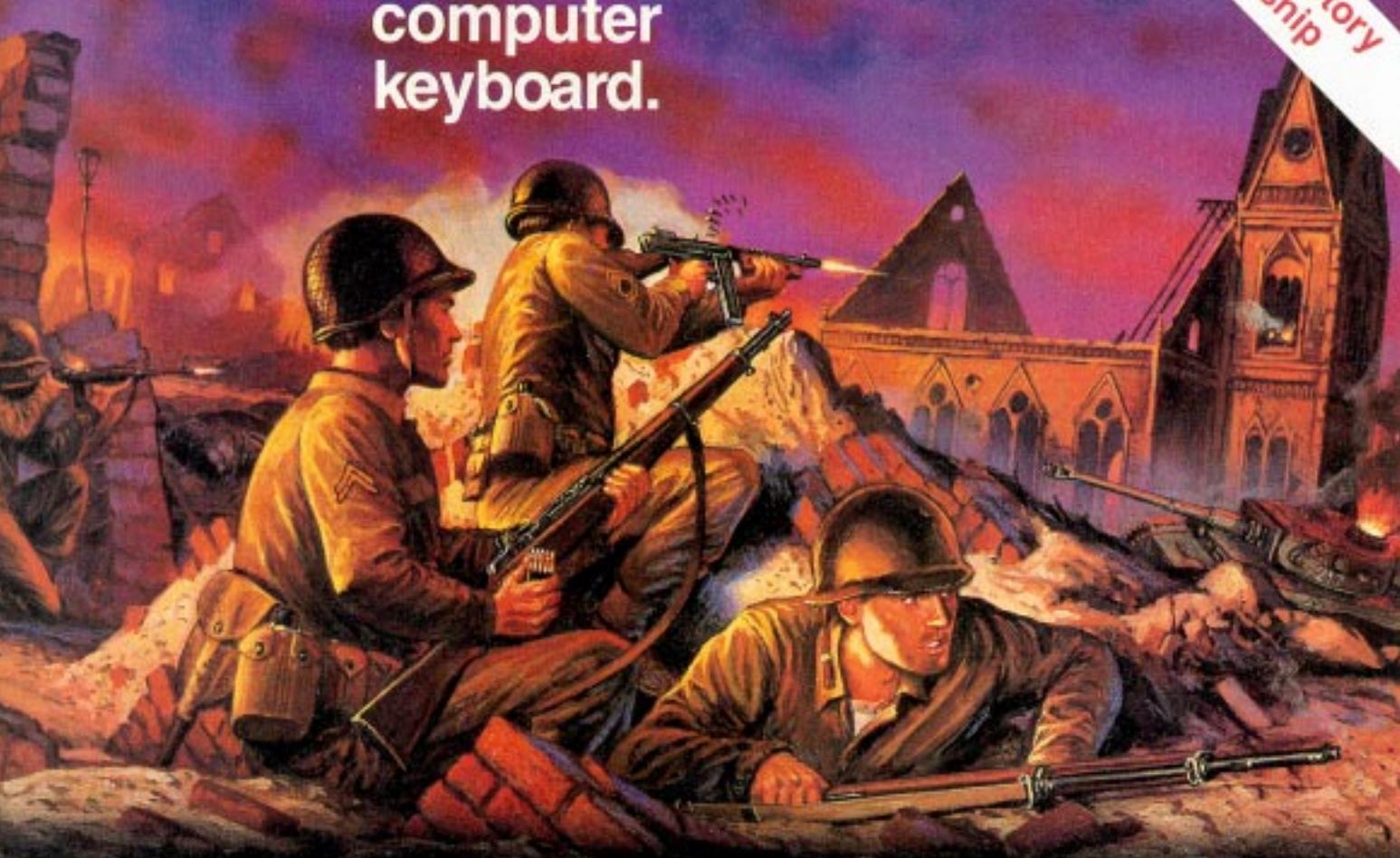


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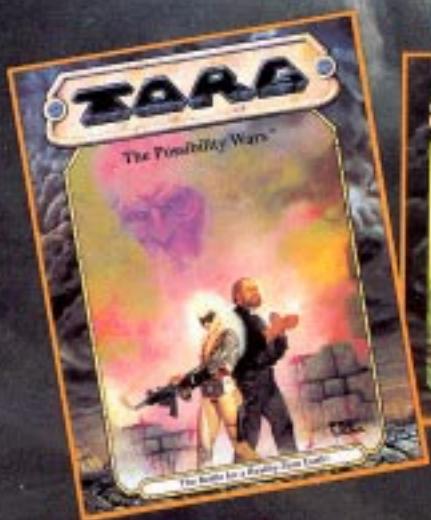
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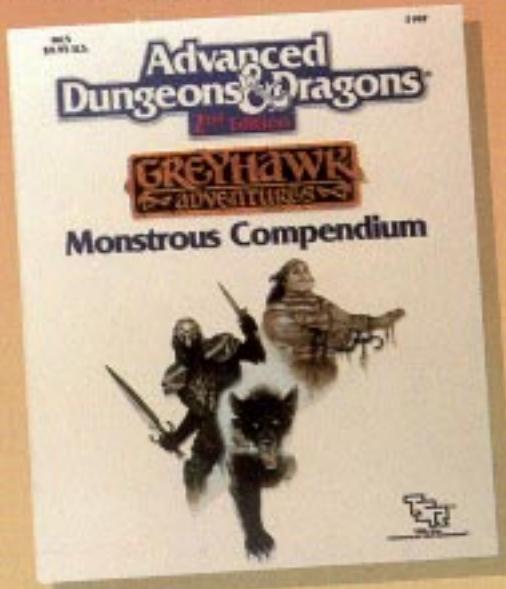
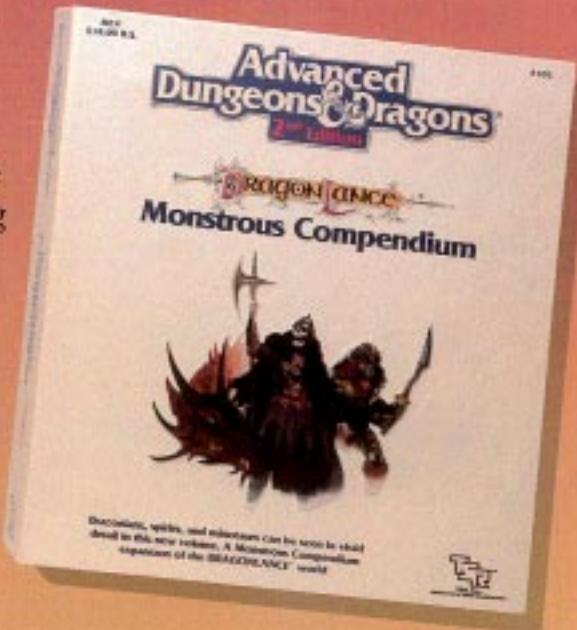
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